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ABSTRACT

Targeted to young people, this book presents a specific process for forming friendships. The first chapter explores the idea of friendship. The importance of friendship, factors that influence friendships, characteristics and qualities of friendships, and ways to keep friendships are discussed. The second chapter defines invitations and shows how invitations can be used to develop friendships. "Disinvitations" are described, and how they destroy friendships and prevent friendships from developing is explained. This chapter also discusses perceptions, and how peoples' perceptions influence their friendships. The third chapter describes how people "see" themselves. How a person's self develops and changes during a lifetime is discussed. The importance of learning about the self is discussed as a prerequisite for forming friendships with others. The fourth chapter presents the steps for being an inviting friend, and shares ideas about when to invite, why to invite, and whom to invite. The fifth chapter combines the ideas found in the first four chapters and describes the importance of inviting yourself. Included in this chapter are ideas about knowing yourself, wanting to be a friend, being healthy, behaving appropriately, and enjoying life. Throughout each chapter are "treasure chest" ideas that summarize important points about friendship. In addition, each chapter contains friendship activities which provide ideas for forming lasting friendships. (LLL)

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Invitation to Friendship

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by John J. Schmidt, Ed.D.

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by

John J. Schmidt, Ed.D.

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With deepest affection to

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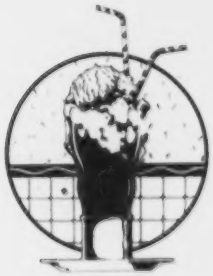
my "best friend"



About This Book

Welcome to a book about friendship. This book is written for young people who want to learn about themselves, about others, and about friendships. *Invitation to Friendship* presents a specific process for forming friendships. It is a book about communications—messages that you send to yourself and others. In this book you will read about the messages that people send to themselves and others which help or hurt friendships.

Some ideas in this book come from the work of Dr. William Watson Purkey. Dr. Purkey is a college professor who has spent many years studying, learning, and writing about the messages people send to each other. One of Dr. Purkey's ideas is that people often send positive messages or do good things for one another. He calls these actions "invitations." Dr. Purkey believes that if people would send more invitations to themselves and to each other, their lives would be much improved.

Invitation to Friendship discusses how you can form strong, lasting friendships by being more inviting toward yourself and others. It consists of five chapters with each chapter focusing on some important ideas about inviting friendships.

Chapter One explores the idea of friendship. In this chapter you will read about the importance of friendship, factors that influence friendships, characteristics and qualities that make up friendships, and ways to help you keep friendships.

Chapter Two defines invitations and shows how invitations can be used to develop friendships. It also describes "disinvitations" and explains how they prevent friendships from developing and how they destroy friendships that already exist. In this chapter you will learn about "perceptions," which are the ways that people "see" things; you will learn how people's perceptions influence their friendships.

Chapter Three describes how people "see" themselves; it explains how a person's *self* develops and changes during a lifetime. It is important to know about the self because, as you will see, people need to make friends with themselves before they are able to form friendships with others.

Chapter Four presents the steps for being an inviting friend. It also shares ideas about when to invite, why to invite, and whom to invite. These ideas make up the process of inviting oneself and others.

Chapter Five combines the ideas found in the first four chapters and describes the importance of inviting yourself. Included in this chapter are ideas about knowing yourself, wanting to be a friend, being healthy, behaving appropriately, and enjoying life.

Throughout each chapter you will find "treasure chest" ideas that summarize important points about friendship. In addition, at the end of each chapter you will find "friendship activities." These activities can be used as starter suggestions to help you get to know yourself better. They may give you some ideas for forming lasting friendships.

I hope that you enjoy this little book and find some ideas and "treasures" to develop new friendships. Sometimes forming friendships is risky and a little scary. You might worry about what "strangers" will think of you. In this book you will learn that friendships are worth the risk. A life filled with friends is a life filled with enjoyment and fond memories. So invite a stranger today. That "stranger" might become you best friend tomorrow.

As with most projects, this book was written with the help of many friends. In particular, I want to give special thanks to Dawn M. Schmidt, my daughter (and one of my "best friends!"), for her support and wise guidance in helping me write this book. I also want to thank William Purkey, Laura Swanson, Jack Knox, and Tom Williams for their helpful suggestions.

J. J. S.

A Note to Parents and Teachers

This book is written for young people in the middle school and junior high grades. While it is written for pre- and early adolescents and will be enjoyable for young people to read on their own, it can also be used as a guide for group discussions. For example, parents may want to read this book with their children and discuss the different ideas found in each chapter. Teachers and school counselors will find this book, including the activities at the end of each chapter, to be a useful resource for group discussions and classroom guidance lessons on friendship and self development. Teachers might also use this book as supplemental reading material for language arts, social studies, or other subjects.

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Chapter 1
Friendship

Don't walk in front of me,
I may not follow.
Don't walk behind me,
I may not lead.
Walk beside me,
And just be my friend.

Albert Camus, philosopher

This is a book about friendship. It is about the way friendships are formed, the qualities contained in friendships, how friendships help people, and why some friendships end. In this book you will learn about a particular view of friendship—a view that will show you how to "invite" friendships for yourself and others.

Before you learn about this particular view of inviting friendships, you will first explore a few ideas about friends and friendship. In this beginning chapter you will learn about how friends are chosen, how friendships are made, why some friendships last a long time while others do not, and how friendships can help you.

Having Friends

Most people want to have friends. It is part of being human. Throughout their lives people develop many friendships. Some of these friendships are brief, some last many years, and a few last a lifetime. People who enjoy their lives want to share that joy with others, and they want to help others enjoy their lives as well.

Sharing and Helping

It is human nature to want to be in the company of others. True, there are times when you may want to be alone, but probably not all the time. One of the reasons people want to have friendships is that friends make them feel wanted, and that is a good feeling. Another reason for having friends is that they can help you in making decisions for yourself. Sometimes people are faced with very difficult decisions in life, and the answers they choose can have lasting positive or negative effects. Friends are supportive in helping you make difficult decisions.

Having close friends to help when you are faced with problems can be comforting. Without friends to support you during difficult times, life would be very, very lonely. In contrast, having friends to share joyful events fills your life with cherished memories.

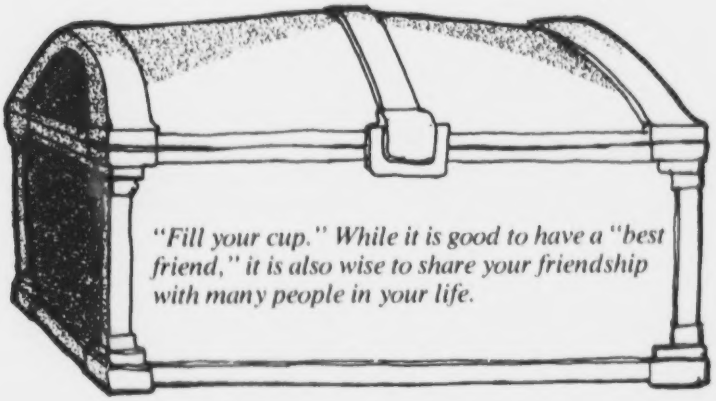
Providing support and sharing joy are two reasons why people want to have friends. There are many other reasons why friendships are made. Because this is so, people tend to form several types of friendships with many different friends.

Types of Friendships

Friendships occur in different ways and at different levels depending on the circumstances. Some friendships are formed quickly and are basically social in nature. These kinds of friendships are more than simply acquaintances, yet they do not reach very deep levels of feeling. You have probably experienced many friendships like this in school,

clubs, or your neighborhood. These friendships are marked by relationships that can be characterized as "being friendly" or as "just friends." You like being with these people, you have fun together, you enjoy the same types of activities, and you consider them friends.

Other friendships you form will have much deeper meaning for you. They are marked by deep feelings for another person that are demonstrated by caring, admiring, and sometimes even loving relationships. These relationships are characterized as "being close friends" or as "best of friends."



"Fill your cup." While it is good to have a "best friend," it is also wise to share your friendship with many people in your life.

Perhaps you have already formed some of these types of friendships. If so, you can probably describe the differences between the people with whom you are "just friends" and those with whom you are "best friends." Both types of friendships are very important in life. You need friends whom you enjoy in a social way. You also need some close friendships that have deep personal meaning. Understanding both of these needs helps you determine which friendships to choose. *Choosing* your friends is the first step in developing friendships.

Choosing Friends

Friendships do not happen by accident. You might meet people by accident, or by coincidence, but the friendships that you make are formed on purpose. Because this is so, it is important to think about how you choose your friends. Let us examine some of the factors that influence your choice of friends.

Proximity

One obvious factor is *proximity*. This word means nearness to you. Most of the friends that you have chosen in your life have lived near you, gone to school with you, belonged to the same clubs as you, or attended the same church as you. They have had close "proximity" with you. In fact, for several people, their "best friend" is a brother or sister with whom they live!

Think about the friends you have right now. How many of your friends live in your neighborhood or apartment building? How many go to school with you, belong to the same clubs as you, or attend your church? Do you have a friend who does not fit in any of the above categories? If so, it is likely that you met that friend through one of your other friends.

Of course, sometimes friends move away and you might still keep in touch with them even though they no longer attend your school, club, or church. Do you have any friends like that? Nearness may have been a factor that helped you choose them as friends, but other factors have now encouraged you to keep the friendships alive even though they are far away. Those are good friendships.

Similarity

Another factor that influences your choice of friends is *similarity*. Most people choose friends who have likes and dislikes that are similar to theirs. This is because friendships are usually built on harmonious relationships rather than on conflict. If two people who are totally different try to form a close friendship, it is possible that they will fre-

quently disagree with one another. Frequent disagreements do not result in lasting friendships. Usually, people want to be with others who think and behave in ways similar to the ways they do.

Think of your friends. You probably have similar tastes, beliefs, and interests. Do you like the same types of music, food, subjects in school, television shows, or other activities? If so, those factors have probably helped to establish your friendships.

"Best Friends"

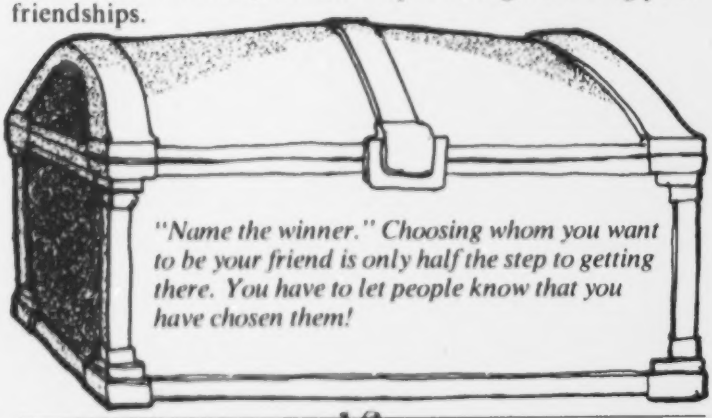
Of course, it is nice to have friends who are in some ways different from you. If everything about your friends was the "same," life might be boring. The key question is "how much different?" Some variety and differences among friends adds interest to relationships. It also challenges friends to try new ideas and experiences. By sharing different ideas and challenging each other in acceptable ways, friends show that their friendships have mutual benefit for themselves as well as for their friends. This belief in mutual benefit *affirms* each friend as a valuable and important person.

Affirmation

Another factor that influences your choice of friends is *affirmation*. Affirmation means that people treat you as a valuable and worthwhile person, and you treat them in similar ways. People seek friendships to give their lives meaning and to help them achieve a feeling of importance. Good friends contribute to this process of affirmation.

You probably do not want to associate with people who do not treat you with respect, who do not care about your opinions, or who put you down when you are around others. By the same token, your friends want to know that you believe they are valuable and worthwhile people too.

Factors such as proximity, similarities, and affirmation help you to select people whom you want as your friends. Once the selection is made, the next step is to begin forming your friendships.



"Name the winner." Choosing whom you want to be your friend is only half the step to getting there. You have to let people know that you have chosen them!

Forming Friendships

Choosing whom you want as friends is relatively easy. It is more difficult to take active steps in forming friendships with the people you choose. This is because forming friendships can be a risky business. It is one thing to choose persons to be your friends, but it is quite another for *them* to choose you as well! Because this is so, it is helpful to understand what goes on when people try to form friendships. One way to understand this is to examine people's feelings as they begin to form new friendships.

"Breaking the Ice"

Think of one of your best friends. Can you remember when you first met this friend and how you felt as the two of you began to form your friendship? If you are like most people, you probably felt a little unsure, and maybe even a little scared. A good illustration of this feeling of uncertainty and being scared can be seen by watching young children who have met for the very first time. If you have younger brothers or sisters, or if you have ever watched young children in a kindergarten or at a doctor's office in the play room, you will know what I mean.

Young children who have never met often approach each other very slowly. They do not talk right away, and they carefully look each other over, while watching the other's behavior. Then, if they decide to approach, they do so ever so slowly. As they become more comfortable with each other, they begin to talk and play, enjoying their time together.

It is similar to the way some people go into a swimming pool. First they put one big toe in, then a foot, and slowly they walk into the pool up to their waist. When they feel the water is "just right," they dive all the way in!

Older children and adults are also cautious when they approach strangers, but they are probably more verbal and formal in their introductions. For example, a girl might introduce herself by saying, "Hi, I'm Janet. Do you go to

school here?" These behaviors, whether by young children or adults, serve the purpose of "breaking the ice" and getting acquainted with other people. The key to being successful in these early "ice breaking" relationships appears to be an element of *optimism.*

Being Optimistic

Optimism means believing that good things are going to happen. Optimistic people are able to form friendships because they believe in themselves and in their ability to get along well with others. They also have positive views of others.

From the initial feelings of uncertainty and fear that people have when forming friendships, they usually begin to feel more comfortable as their friendships emerge. They will continue feeling more comfortable as long as their relationships proceed in hopeful, optimistic directions. Optimistic relationships examine the possibilities of what *can* be, rather than what *can't* be.

Too often friendships fail because people allow their own fears to prevent them from accepting new challenges. These people are often heard using the phrase "I can't." Optimistic friendships avoid the "can'ts" and spend energy on what *can* be done. This does not mean that optimistic friends force their will on others. Quite the contrary, it means that optimistic friends expect their relationships to have a positive, forward-moving direction, while at the same time *respecting* the views of others.

Having Respect

Becoming more comfortable with other people means that you are able to share mutual *respect* with them. Mutual respect is established when persons show that they care for each other's feelings, opinions, and desires. The opposite of respect is *disrespect* for others. People are disrespectful when they do not care about what others want, or how they feel. Disrespect is a major barrier to friendship. An example of why this is so can be seen in the story of Philip.

Philip was new at school and he wanted very much to make friends with the other students. Most of the students were friendly toward him and they frequently asked Philip to join them in games and other activities. But Philip had one problem. When he participated in games or other events, he had this strong urge to be in charge, to be the "boss." As a result, he would often make up his own rules and take control of the game or activity. As you can imagine, the other students disliked this. They wanted their ideas and wishes respected, but Philip was like a powerful locomotive running full steam ahead. In time, the other students gradually stopped inviting him to join with them.

This, of course, hurt his feelings. But instead of trying to see how he could change his own behavior, Philip tried to "get even" by being mean and even more disrespectful toward the others. Naturally, this did not improve things, and Philip continued to lose friends.

Gaining respect takes work. You work at it by being respectful towards those around you, including those who are not necessarily your friends. You respect their feelings by being kind to them, you respect their belongings by asking permission to borrow things, and you respect their freedom by not forcing them to accept all your wishes. It is through these respectful behaviors that you are able to move your friendships further along by developing *trust* in one another.

Developing Trust

As friendships continue to develop, mutual respect becomes even greater and friends have *trust* in each other. Trust is the ability to have faith in another person. It means having faith that the other person will treat you kindly and will not harm you. By the same token, the other person has similar feelings about you that help the friendship to grow stronger. Trust develops friendships, but its opposite, distrust, destroys them.

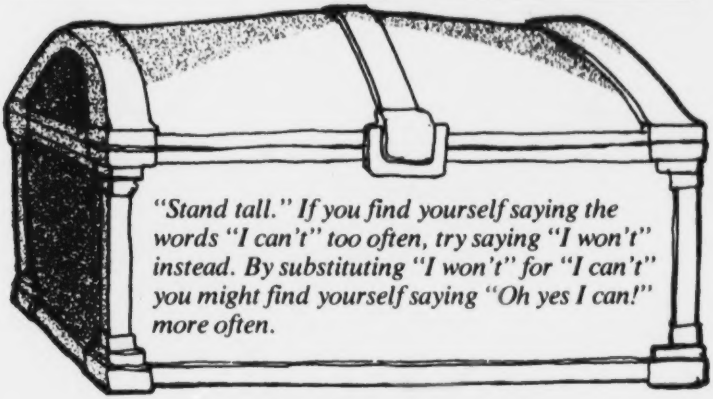
You have seen that friendships develop when people become more comfortable with each other and show faith in one another. If that faith is broken, friendships can end immediately. Trust can take a long time to win, but it also can be lost in a heartbeat. Perhaps you have had friendships that ended because trust was broken. There are many ways this can happen. For example, sometimes it happens because a friend tells a secret that you were keeping. If a friend reveals secrets to others, trust can be shattered, frequently beyond repair.

Another way that trust is weakened and sometimes broken occurs when people are unreliable and undependable. Friendships are formed because people want to *rely* and *depend* on others. When reliance and dependence no longer exist, there can be little trust. An example of this is when friends constantly use excuses or blame others for their own behaviors and mistakes.

Suppose you had a friend who usually was late and kept you waiting, but always had an excuse or blamed someone else for being late. If your friend continued to behave this way, you would probably tire of that relationship. You would no longer believe the excuses, which would mean that you no longer trusted this friend. When you begin to form friendships, trust can not be compromised. You either have trust in a relationship, or you do not.

Trust, like optimism and respect, is an important quality in having friendships. As you will see, these three qualities are also important in becoming an "inviting" friend. You will learn more about optimism, respect, and trust in the next chapter of this book.

All three of these qualities combine to create the *courage* needed to form friendships. Friendships do not always come easily. You have to be willing to take the risk that sometimes people will not accept your friendship right away. When people reject your friendship, it hurts. But if you never take the risk to make friends, then you may never know the joy of these relationships. If you have the courage and maintain it, some of your friendships will last a lifetime.


"Stand tall." If you find yourself saying the words "I can't" too often, try saying "I won't" instead. By substituting "I won't" for "I can't" you might find yourself saying "Oh yes I can!" more often.

Keeping Friendships

The qualities that are needed when choosing and forming friendships are also found in lasting friendships. Optimism, trust, and respect must be kept at high levels for relationships to last a long time. When one or more of these ingredients is weakened or neglected, friendships break up.

As you have already seen, friendships do not happen by accident. They are carefully developed and nurtured over a period of time. For friendships to continue, they must be kept in good working order. This means that friends must remain optimistic, continue to win the respect of others, and behave in the most trustworthy ways. Developing these qualities to keep friendships alive requires specific actions that show how you *care* for others and *evaluate* your relationships.

Caring

Much like tending a flower garden, keeping friendships requires actions that will result in a harvest of positive relationships. Just as flowers need water, sunlight, food, and care, friendships require similar attention. A tended garden will produce flowers much the same way that a friendship produces enjoyment and pleasure. On the other hand, an untended garden will not produce healthy, beautiful flowers any more than a neglected friendship will result in a positive relationship. A harvest of friendships and positive relationships takes a great deal of work.

Working to have positive friendships requires actions that have specific direction and purpose. In other words, if you are going to "care" about your friendships, you have to have good *intentions*. You have to intend for good things to happen in your relationships. Good things sometimes happen by luck or accident, but if you really want to have strong friendships, you have to *make* good things happen.

Someone once said that there are basically four types of "friends." The first type is a friend who "waits for good things to happen." This type of friend does not actively participate in a friendship, but rather sits back and waits for others to take action. A second type of friend is one who "wonders what happened." This type of friend never takes the first step in a friendship, and usually blames others when things do not go right. The third type of friend is one who "watches things happen." These friends are spectators. They sit by the side line and rarely join in the fun. They enjoy watching, but seldom participate. It is the fourth type of friend who becomes involved and "makes things happen." These friends actively participate in their friendships by intentionally planning and doing things to show that they care about others.

The root meaning of the word in*tend* is "to tend" or, in other words, "to care" for something. As you have seen, it is important "to tend" to your friendships in much the same way that you might "tend to" your garden. *Intention* is an important quality in friendships, and one that you will learn more about later in this book.

Because caring requires direction and purpose, it is necessary to determine *which* direction and *what* purpose. In friendships it is important to know where you are headed, and why you are going there. To know this, your friendships need to be evaluated.

Evaluating

Evaluating your friendships means asking yourself about your friends and your relationships with them, and what they mean to you. Returning to the illustration of the flower garden, you can see that similar evaluation takes place.

When flowers are picked each season, the gardener determines how nice they look and whether or not the same type of flowers should be planted again. Different species of flowers grow successfully or unsuccessfully depending on the location of the garden, the amount of sunlight received, and the quality of the soil. Also, the types of flowers that are grown will depend on the preferences and needs of the gardener.

Friendships are similarly evaluated. People want friendships that they enjoy and that make them feel wanted, valuable, and important. Friendships that satisfy these feelings are tended to like a garden. Those that do not are either neglected or broken.

"Loves me, loves me not..."

Sometimes people neglect friendships, not because their needs are unsatisfied, but simply because they forget that friendships require their attention. When this happens, friendships frequently end, and then people wonder why. An example of this is the story of Ricky, a boy who made friends easily.

Ricky had many friends, but not many close friends or longtime friends. It seemed that he liked it when others invited him to join their activities and shared things with him, but Ricky seldom returned the favor by reaching out to others. As a result, his friends soon got tired of always doing the inviting and sharing, and they moved on to other friendships. Ricky did not realize that friendships are partnerships which require both parties to contribute to the relationship. Because he did not participate equally in his friendships, Ricky's friends felt their relationships with him were "one-sided." These types of friendships seldom last long.

On occasion, friendships need to be evaluated by the *harm* they are doing. Sometimes people get into relationships that are harmful instead of helpful. An example would be if a "friend" asked you to steal something. Stealing is wrong. It is not a helpful action and persons who call themselves "friends" and encourage you to steal need to be reminded that your friendship is based on optimism, trust, and respect. Stealing does not fit with any of these qualities. True friendships are equally *helpful* to everyone involved.

Another example of a friendship that needs to be evaluated is when a friend constantly questions your loyalty because of other friendships you have made. Friends who try to monopolize your friendship and prevent you from forming other relationships need to be questioned. True friends welcome the opportunity to expand their friendships and are not threatened by your desire to have more friends.

Keeping friendships, as you have seen, requires specific behaviors that focus on the continued development of optimism, trust, and respect, and also on the evaluation of the benefits of each relationship. Choosing, forming, and keep-

ing friends all require behaviors that are optimistic, trustworthy, and respectful. The development of such behaviors needs a specific plan of action. In this book you will learn about a specific plan called "inviting friendships."

Inviting Friendships

Have your ever wondered why some people have so many friends and others have so few? There are probably many answers that come to mind as you think about this question. For example, you might think that some people are smarter, better looking, richer, luckier, or more talented than others and this helps them have friends. In some cases you would be correct. Some people are smarter, some prettier, some more talented, and some are richer. This is true, but intelligence, fame, beauty, talent, and wealth do not always equal successful friendships. In fact, sometimes people who are wealthy, pretty, or smart do not have many friends and are not happy.

You can probably think of people who have talent, money, fame, or beauty but are not happy or successful in their lives. Perhaps you know someone like this, or maybe you have seen a television character that expresses these feelings—someone about whom people say, "That person has so much talent (or money) and yet is so miserable and unhappy." You might know of people who seem to be on top of the world, but in fact they are most unhappy.

If intelligence, beauty, fame, wealth, or talent do not always add up to success and happiness, what are the conditions that contribute to a successful and happy life? In particular, why are some people successful and happy in their friendships while others are not?

Answers to these questions have been sought for a long, long time, but no simple or easy answers have been found. At best, it seems that there are a combination of factors that contribute to success and happiness. Specifically, success and happiness appear to be dependent on how you communicate and relate with others.

Dr. William Purkey has studied and written about communication and human relationships. A few years ago he wrote a book, *Inviting School Success*, in which he talked about how people, particularly students and teachers in schools, can learn to communicate successfully with each other. One thing Dr. Purkey said was that people are always sending messages to themselves and others. These messages are sent when people talk and behave in certain ways towards themselves and others. Some messages that people send to themselves and others are helpful and beneficial, while others are harmful and destructive. Dr. Purkey called these helpful messages "invitations," and he called the harmful messages "disinvitations."

According to this view, successful people send mostly "invitations" to themselves and others. This is what makes them successful in their friendships. In other words, they "invite" success. People who are unsuccessful in their lives, particularly in their friendships, send and receive too many disinvitations.

So far, you have seen that friendships are chosen, formed, and maintained by the positive actions that you and others take. In this book you will learn that these positive actions can take the form of *invitations*. What are these invitations? How are invitations sent? The next chapter of this book will answer these and other questions about invitations.

You're
Invited!
J. SCHMIDT

Friendship Activities

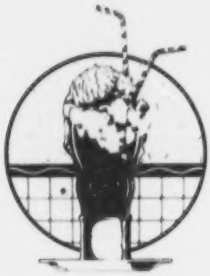
At the end of each chapter of this book you will find a list of friendship activities. These activities are "invitations" to help you learn more about yourself and to encourage you to discover more about the power of invitations and friendships. Enjoy them!

1. **Friendship Scrapbook.** Take pictures of all your friends and put them in a scrapbook. Write some interesting facts about each of your friends next to their pictures. As you get older, this book will remain with fond memories of friendships that have touched you in many ways.

2. **Name Puzzle.** Write all the names of your friends in a word puzzle. Make copies of the puzzle, give them to your friends, and ask them to circle all the names they find. Give a prize to the first one finished! The example below has the names of five of my daughter's and my friends. Can you find them? Be sure to look across, down, backwards, upside down, and every which way.

Z	H	O	P	Y	K	L	M
L	N	I	R	E	I	Z	I
Q	O	R	T	R	M	K	T
W	A	S	W	F	V	Z	D
L	X	C	Y	T	A	P	G

3. **Write a Song.** Make up a song about your friends. Use a popular tune or a famous round like "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and make up a silly song.



Chapter 2
Invitations

In Chapter One you learned that the types of messages people send to themselves and others influence the types of friendships they form throughout their lives. How people talk to and behave around others helps to determine how successful their friendships will be. In this book you will learn how consistent positive messages can help to develop long lasting friendships. As mentioned in the first chapter, Dr. William Purkey named these positive messages "invitations." Let us now learn more about these powerful messages.

An Introduction to Invitations

By studying the messages that people send and receive, Dr. Purkey discovered that some messages are very good and helpful while others are not so good, and some are even harmful. Every day people send and receive hundreds of messages and signals that say to themselves or others that they are important, valuable, and worthwhile people. For example, telling your mom, dad, brother, or sister that you love them sends the message that they are important, valuable, and worthwhile. Studying for a school test sends yourself a message that you too are important, valuable, and worthwhile. Helping friends to fix a bike, build a dog house, or bake cookies are ways to send similar messages that tell others you care about them.

By the same token, it is sad but true that people send messages and signals to themselves and others that tell them that they are unimportant, not valuable, and worthless. For example, calling yourself "stupid" because you made a mistake, telling lies about a friend, or teasing your little brother or sister are signals you send to yourself and others, that say you, or they, are unimportant and worthless.

Dr. Purkey named these two types of messages and signals "invitations" and "disinvitations." Good, helpful, and kind messages and signals are called "invitations," while harmful, hurtful messages are "disinvitations." We will explore each of these types of messages in detail. First, let us learn about invitations.

Invitations

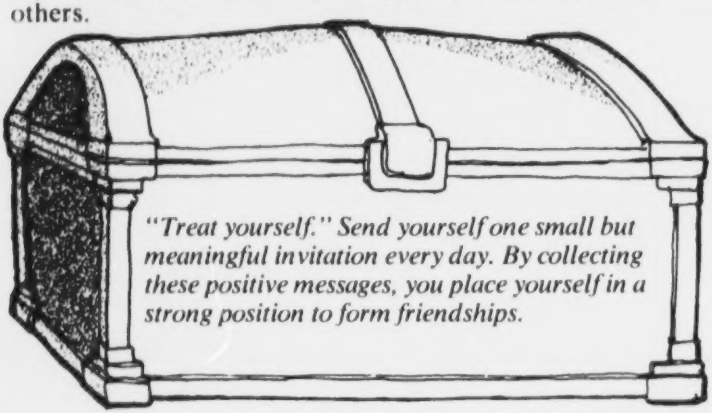
When people say or do good things for themselves and others, they are sending *invitations* that help them see themselves and others as valuable, capable, and responsible. When your parents tell you that you've done a good job with a chore around the house, or a friend shares a secret with you, they are sending you an invitation. When you tell yourself to stay healthy, eat less sugar, study your school assignments, practice your piano playing or your baseball batting, you are inviting yourself to become a better person, student, musician, or baseball player.

Invitations are the many messages, signals, and actions that people use to tell themselves and others positive things, which help them feel good about themselves. Sometimes an invitation may be small and seemingly insignificant, such as helping your dad wash the dishes, or it may be a major event, such as spending time to help your younger brother or sister learn to ride a two-wheel bike for the first time. There are many types and different levels of invitations, but all are important and all contribute to the friendships you form in your life.

For example, when you smile to a new boy in your neighborhood who passes you on the sidewalk, it may seem like an unimportant message. It may be a "tiny" invitation, but

if no one else has ever smiled at the boy before, your smile might be the most important message he has ever received! Most people will welcome a sincere smile.

Some invitations are very big and require a great deal of planning, such as saving your allowance several months for a new bike, or working towards an "A" in math! Invitations come in many shapes and sizes, but no matter how big or small they are, all invitations are important. Sometimes people forget that everything they say or do has value, either positive or negative. The lesson to remember about invitations is that *everything counts.* Everything you do or say can make a difference in your life and the lives of others.



"Treat yourself." Send yourself one small but meaningful invitation every day. By collecting these positive messages, you place yourself in a strong position to form friendships.

Sometimes invitations are obvious, such as a party invitation that arrives in the mail. These invitations are visible to you and to others. You can observe them happening and you know who did them. Other times invitations are, more or less, invisible. An invisible invitation is one that you receive, but you do not know who sent it. An example of an invisible invitation would be when you do something helpful around the house, like taking out the garbage—not because you were asked, but simply because you saw that it needed to be done. Later, your mother or father might say, "Who took out the garbage? Thank you. That was very helpful!" Both visible and invisible invitations can be useful in choosing, forming, and keeping friendships.

Invitations are also sent verbally and nonverbally. Sometimes people send the most important messages not by what they say to their friends, but how they behave toward them. The famous saying, "Actions speak louder than words," is often true in friendships. More importantly, the positive things you say need to be validated by your behaviors. It is damaging to friendships when people say one thing and then do another. In order for your friendships to last, what you say must be consistent with what you do. This is what is meant by being *reliable* and *dependable*. True friends say what they mean, and mean what they say.

The more invitations a person receives, the more likely that person will feel worthwhile. As a result, people who are frequently invited themselves often send invitations to others. People who feel good about themselves and are confident that they can be successful, usually treat others respectfully and send many inviting messages to themselves and others.

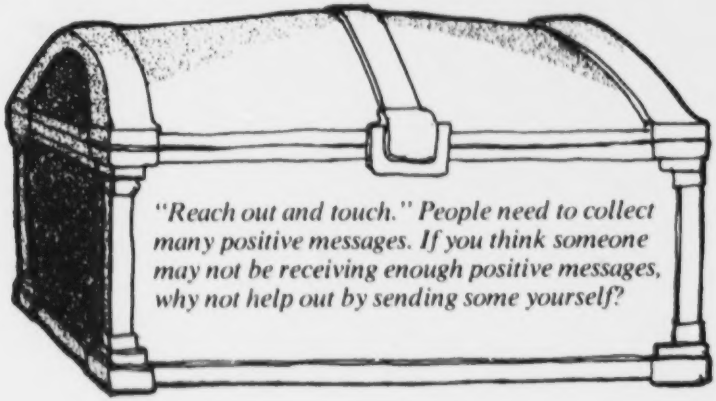
"Invitations feel so good!"

Disinvitations

Unfortunately not all the messages people send and receive are good ones. Sometimes messages and signals can be "disinviting." These messages tell people that they are no good, unimportant, dumb, or worthless. Being told that you cannot play on the team because "you do not hit the ball well enough," getting an *F* on a book report because you "forgot to use the correct color ink," or hitting and hurting someone because you "did not like the way they looked at you" are some examples of how people send harmful and destructive messages to themselves and others.

Just as everything counts with invitations, so it is with disinvitations. No disinviting action goes unnoticed or is totally unimportant. The more negative messages people receive, the more likely they are to send negative messages to themselves and others. For example, if people keep telling you by their words or actions that you are dumb, eventually you might begin to believe that it is true. You might start telling yourself that you are stupid and cannot do anything right. Eventually, you might stop trying to learn, and that would be very sad.

In friendship, as in school, people will be successful or unsuccessful based on the invitations or disinvitations they send and receive. People who disinvite most of the time will have difficulty forming and keeping friendships.



"Reach out and touch." People need to collect many positive messages. If you think someone may not be receiving enough positive messages, why not help out by sending some yourself?

As you can see, there are many ways that you can invite or disinvite yourself and others. To help people understand their messages and signals a little better, Dr. Purkey developed four types of invitations and disinvitations. He called them "levels of inviting" and they are:

1. Intentionally Disinviting
2. Unintentionally Disinviting
3. Unintentionally Inviting
4. Intentionally Inviting

You have already seen examples of invitations and disinvitations, but the words intentionally and unintentionally are new ones. You learned a little about the importance of intentions in the first chapter of this book, but before you learn each of the four levels of inviting, we will examine these two words more closely. To become a truly inviting friend, it is important to know the difference between *intentional* behaviors and *unintentional* behaviors.

Intentional Behaviors

The word "intentional" refers to behaviors, actions, and words that are said and done on purpose. You think about them, you know that you are saying or doing them, and you "intend" them to happen. Therefore, when you say or do something intentionally, you *mean it!*

Sometimes your behaviors are intentional because you have taken a long time to think about them, planned how you were going to act, and then behaved according to your plan. For example, have you ever surprised someone with a present? If you did, you will probably remember that you thought about what present you were going to get, where to hide the present so it would not be found, and what "story" you would use to cover up the surprise. When the person expressed surprise, you felt satisfied because that's what you *intended.*

On other occasions your behaviors are intentional, not because of your plan, but because past experiences influence you to behave in a certain way. An example of this

would be riding a bicycle. If you know how to ride a bike, you do not think very much about *how* to ride it, you just get on and do it. It is almost automatic. You ride your bike *intentionally*, but you do so with such ease and without much thought because your past experiences have taught you how to ride without falling off.

Intentional behaviors can be either positive or negative. They can be either invitations or disinvitations. What they have in common is that they are done with purpose. If you did not mean for them to happen, they would not be intentional, rather they would be *unintentional* behaviors.

Unintentional Behaviors

When people say or do something that they do not mean or do not want to happen, they are behaving unintentionally. Have you ever said, "Oh, I didn't mean it!" Everyone has at some time or other. Sometimes you do not give much thought to your behaviors or you may not plan well enough, and as a result things do not work out as you want them to. If you were planning a picnic of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and you packed everything but the bread, you might not be too happy with yourself when you opened up the picnic basket at the park. You made a mistake, but it was unintentional.

"Darn!"

Sometimes your unintentional behaviors might work out well. Have you ever been surprised by how good something has turned out and you said, "Wow, am I lucky!" You realized that it was not your planning that made the difference, but only your good fortune.

Intentional and unintentional behaviors exist all around us, and it is not always easy to tell them apart. Even when you think of your own behaviors, it is not always clear whether you mean them or not! The following story tells about a new boy at school. See if you can detect which behaviors are intentionally or unintentionally inviting or disinviting.

Susan was in the ninth grade and had been at Dewey High School for three months. One day her algebra teacher, Miss Hatchet, introduced a new boy to the class. She said, "Boys and girls, this is Bobby Richards. He is new to our school. Bobby, you may sit at that desk over there."

Susan remembered her first day at Dewey and how Mrs. Hatchet had introduced her with almost the exact same words. She remembered how scared she was walking down the aisle with all the eyes looking at her and realizing that everyone knew her name, but she did not know anyone. She thought, "Will they like me? What do they think about me?" She was so scared!

As Bobby Richards came down the aisle, Susan looked at his eyes. He looked scared too. Bobby saw her eyes and Susan smiled at him and said, "Hi. I'm Susan. Welcome to our class!" Bobby's face broke into a wide grin and he said, "Thanks."

Whose behaviors were intentional, unintentional, inviting, or disinviting? It is most likely that Susan's words were intentionally spoken to help Bobby feel welcomed. She *wanted* to help him. As you will see later in this book, "wanting to" is an important step in being intentionally inviting. What do you think about Mrs. Hatchet's words and behaviors? Were they inviting or disinviting; intentional or unintentional? Actually, we can only guess. Bobby could tell us how he felt when she introduced him, and that might

give us a hint as to whether or not he felt invited. It is important to remember that it is the person *sending* the message who controls whether it is intentional or unintentional, but it is the person *receiving* the message who decides whether it is truly inviting or disinviting. This will become clearer later in this chapter when you learn how people see things differently, and how these differences help determine whether or not messages are inviting.

So far you have learned about the differences between invitations and disinvitations and about intentional and unintentional behaviors. Now it is time to combine these four elements and look at the levels of inviting.

Levels of Inviting

People do not behave the same way all the time. Sometimes they are kind and helpful and sometimes they are thoughtless and hurtful. There are many reasons for this. How people feel about themselves, how busy they are, how tired they might be, or how important something is to them are a few reasons why people behave in different ways at different times.

At this point you are going to learn about the four levels of inviting. Some of these levels are helpful and some are not. People behave at each of the four levels at different times, depending on how they feel, whom they are with, or other reasons. Sometimes people are inviting, sometimes they are disinviting, sometimes they do things intentionally, and sometimes they do things by accident. How people behave *most of the time* greatly influences the friendships they form with others. Keeping that in mind, let us explore the four levels of inviting and disinviting behaviors.

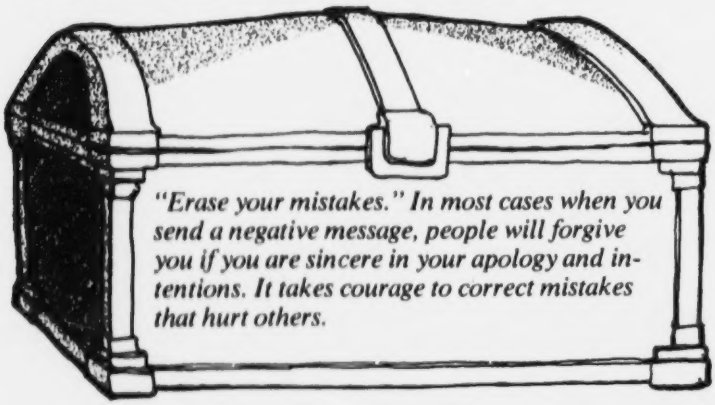
Intentionally Disinviting

The worst level of behaving is to be intentionally disinviting towards yourself or others. When people behave this way, they are mean to others because they want to be. They know what they are doing and they do not care about the harm or hurt that is being done. Think of a story you have read or a

television show you have watched that told about characters who were intentionally disinviting. What can you say about these characters? How do they look? How do they behave towards other people? Why do you think they behave that way? Probably most of the comments you would make about these characters would not be very nice. You might have thought that these characters looked scary or mean and they were rotten toward other people.

It is difficult to determine why people are intentionally disinviting. Sometimes people have been treated poorly by others for so long that they have come to believe that they are worthless. Because they believe it so strongly, they begin to behave in ways that mistreat themselves and other people. All of us are intentionally disinviting at some times. But most people behave that way when they are tired, angry, or they are "trying to get even" with someone who has hurt them. Of course, none of these are good reasons to behave in disinviting ways. In fact, there are *no good reasons* to send negative, harmful messages to yourself or others. But sometimes you do.

In many cases disinvitations are easily forgiven, particularly when they involve people about whom you care and who care about you. It takes courage to correct a disinvitation, and *courage* is an important element in becoming a more inviting person. As you saw earlier, it is also important in developing long lasting friendships.



"Erase your mistakes." In most cases when you send a negative message, people will forgive you if you are sincere in your apology and intentions. It takes courage to correct mistakes that hurt others.

What about the person who is *always* intentionally disinviting? Can anything be done to help such a person? It is difficult, but you must try. And keep trying, because everyone in this world is important. Sometimes it can be discouraging to keep trying to help someone who is constantly mean and nasty to you. But on occasion you will make progress, and in some cases you will help people change their lives. When that happens, it not only helps others, but it is also very rewarding to you because you feel so good about it.

You probably have heard stories or read newspaper articles about people who have had difficult lives or have been criminals and they have changed their ways because a "friend" took an interest in them. Sometimes these friends are teachers, counselors, ministers, or other professionals, but on occasion it is simply someone who saw a fellow person in need and reached out to help.

Frequently, people who are intentionally disinviting only need someone to care about them. When they see that another person has an interest in their well-being, they begin to behave more kindly towards themselves and others. This change, if nurtured by a good friend, can help the person move to a higher level of behaving.

Unintentionally Disinviting

In most cases when people disinvite themselves or others, they do not mean it. The disinvitation happens by accident or because they simply do not think about their behavior. This is being *unintentionally disinviting*.

All people are unintentionally disinviting at some time or another. When they are, they feel bad about it because they know someone has been hurt due to their carelessness or thoughtlessness. But even though they feel bad, they hesitate to do anything about it. Sometimes they hesitate because they are scared. They are afraid that people might be angry at them, and might not want to make up and be their friend.

Have you ever hurt someone's feelings and were so scared to apologize that you ignored it ever happened? Or, did you make up stories to say that you did not do it? Sometimes your unintentional disinvitations can quickly become *intentional* ones if you refuse to accept responsibility for your behaviors. The more stories you tell, the bigger hole you dig to bury your friendships.

Although some disinvitations are unintentional, this does not mean that you can overlook them. Unintentional disinvitations can be as harmful to yourself and others as intentional ones are. In some cases they can hurt even more. For example, let's say that a boy in your school is mean to just about everyone. That's right. He is intentionally disinviting. Every time he sees you he does something mean, calls you a name, or makes a face at you. You have come to expect it. So much so that it does not bother you as much as it first did. You have learned to ignore his insulting behaviors.

Now let us say another student, a girl who is your friend, forgets to invite you to a party she is having. How would you feel? Chances are if you really cared about going to the party, you would be hurt because you did not receive an invitation. In fact, the hurt may be more painful than the insults you receive from the boy, because those you have come to expect. When a friend unintentionally disinvites, you might feel totally neglected.

As with the other levels of inviting, unintentional disinvitations happen to and are sent by all of us at some time or other. All people behave this way on occasion. Even though they are unintentional, these negative messages, as you have seen, can do as much harm as intentional ones. It is important to avoid behaviors that are unintentionally disinviting to yourself and others.

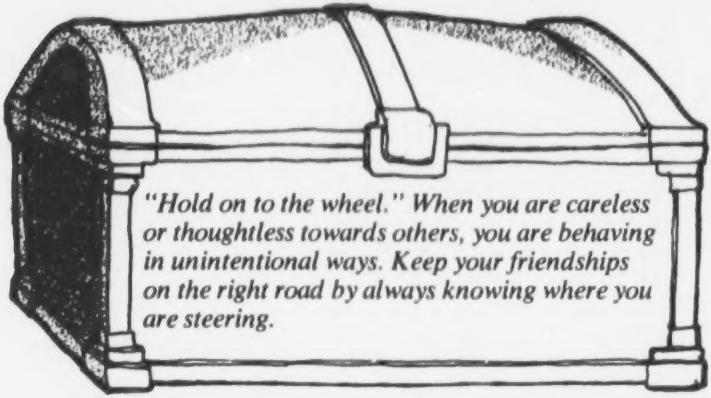
Sometimes messages bring positive results even though they have occurred by accident. When this occurs, the sender is being *unintentionally inviting*. This brings us to the next level of inviting.

Unintentionally Inviting

Occasionally people do things that work out very well even though they do not know why. Have you ever had someone thank you for helping them, but you really didn't have them in mind when you did it? For example, in the springtime you want to ride your bicycle, but when you go to get it out of the garage or storage area, you find a mess of boxes, lawn equipment, and other stuff piled up in front of the bike. Without much thought, you clean away the boxes, put the tools back in their proper places and take the bike out for a ride. Later that day your dad comes to you and says, "Thank you so much for cleaning up the garage. It was a job I was meaning to do, and you really helped me."

Do you feel a little uncomfortable with his praise? Maybe a little. But do you tell him the truth; that you were only trying to get your bike out? Heavens no! Dad feels good. So what if you did not mean it. It worked out great, right? Maybe he will raise your allowance! Don't spoil a good thing by telling him!

You might ask at this point, what is wrong with unintentional invitations? If they are positive messages and help people, what is wrong with them? Well, nothing is wrong with them because they do help people. But this book is about friendships and how invitations can help you choose, form, and keep friendships. One thing about forming and keeping friendships that you have already learned is that you have to work at them. Good friendships do not develop by accident. You have to want them, plan for them, and make them happen. Quality friendships are formed *intentionally*. So you see, if you always are unintentional, then you do not know what you are doing to help your friendships. Without this knowledge you cannot repeat positive behaviors that help you form lasting friendships.



"Hold on to the wheel." When you are careless or thoughtless towards others, you are behaving in unintentional ways. Keep your friendships on the right road by always knowing where you are steering.

Unintentional invitations are nice because they have positive outcomes. People feel good and appreciate what has been done for them. To form friendships, however, you must consistently search for ways to be with other people and share their lives. Unintentional behaviors will not help you be consistent. When you are not consistent with your behaviors, people soon learn that they cannot *depend* on you.

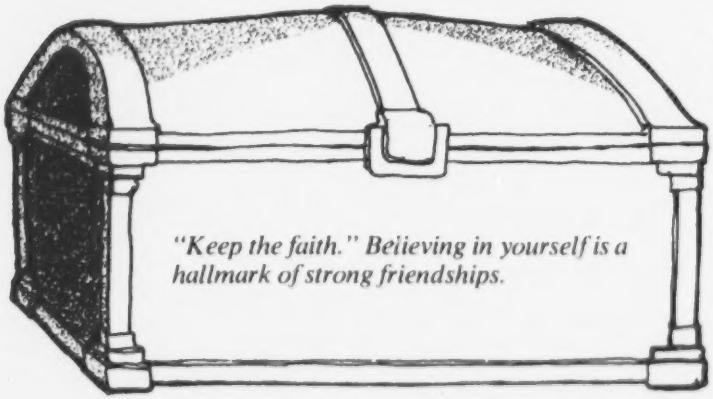
Dependability is another element of inviting. If people find they can depend on you, it is likely they will want to form strong friendships. As you learned earlier, a good friend is one whom you can trust under any circumstances. Dependability helps develop this trust between friends. Once you have the courage to correct your mistakes and maintain a level of dependable behavior, you are more likely to function at the highest level of inviting—intentionally inviting.

Intentionally Inviting

Have you known people who "have it all together?" They are pleasant to be around and they have many friends. Dr. Purkey once said that there are some people who seem to "glitter when they walk." Do you know any people who "glitter when they walk?" If so, you know that they are people who, beyond being successful at most everything they do, treat others with thoughtfulness and respect. They are truly intentionally inviting.

So far, you have learned about two characteristics of being an inviting person—*courage* and *dependability*. It is time to learn about some of the other qualities that will help you become intentionally inviting in your friendships.

People who are intentionally inviting behave with a high level of *responsibility*. They take charge of their lives, do not make excuses for their mistakes, and refuse to blame others for problems they have. Being a responsible person requires an *optimistic* view of one's life, an ability to earn the *trust* of others and to trust in return, a strong *respect* for oneself and others, and, as you have seen, the ability to be *intentional* with one's behaviors. Persons can maintain a high level of intentionally inviting behaviors if they have a positive view of their lives, have faith that changes can be made in those things that need to be changed, have a high regard for their own abilities, value other people, and develop close trusting relationships.



"Keep the faith." Believing in yourself is a hallmark of strong friendships.

You may remember at this point that the qualities of courage, dependability, optimism, trust, and respect were mentioned in Chapter One as important elements in choosing, forming, and keeping friendships. To those qualities we

have now added responsibility and intentionality. Lasting friendships are formed and survive because people behave in dependable, optimistic, trusting, respectful, and responsible ways toward each other. When friendships collapse, it is because one or more of these elements has been lost. Maintaining lasting friendships requires intentional behaviors that focus on the important qualities found in invitations.

Friendships and invitations are also related because of the perceptions of the people involved. Perceptions are defined as the ways that people see, understand, and learn about the things around them. This learning takes place through all of your senses. The way you see, hear, feel, and smell things helps you to "perceive" all that is around. To fully understand invitations and friendships, you will want to learn about and understand your own perceptions as well as the perceptions of others.

Perceiving and Inviting

Have you ever watched a movie, play, or skit at school and after it was over you and your friends disagreed about whether it was good or bad? You may have said, "What a great movie!" and your friends looked at you in a weird way and said, "What? Are you nuts? That was a stupid movie!" You all saw the same event, at the same time, and in the same place. Why do you not have the same "perception" of it? To understand why this happens you must first have an understanding of what perceptions are and how people form them.

When you were born, you came into the world without any knowledge or experiences. This is true for everyone. It is as if your world began as an empty balloon. Quickly you started to have experiences, and you used your senses to learn about the world, understand it, and draw conclusions about your experiences in it. These experiences began to fill your perceptual world (your balloon if you will), much like in the drawing Figure A.

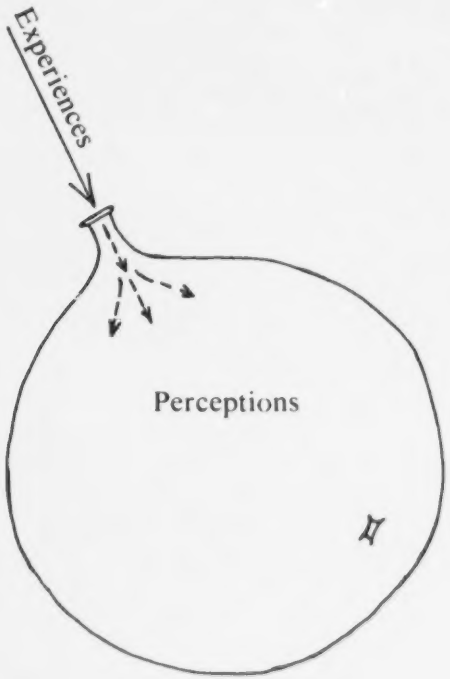


Figure A

Based on the number and types of experiences you accumulated over time, you formed certain perceptions and opinions about yourself and your world, and those opinions help guide your behaviors. In one way this is similar to a balloon. If you blow up a balloon just a little and let it go, it will not fly too far. But if you keep blowing it up very large and let it go, it will fly much further. So it is with perceptions and experiences. The more experiences you have, the wider your choices of behaviors can be. The strength of your experiences in life, much like the air being blown into the balloon, influences your perceptions (the amount of air in the balloon), and those perceptions help to guide your behaviors.

When the air in your balloon is released, it flies differently than anyone else's balloon, just as your perceptions guide you differently than other people's perceptions guide them. That is why people's perceptions of the same or similar events often disagree with the perceptions of their friends, or even their brothers and sisters.

Each person's world is unique. No one else has one exactly like it. As a result, everyone sees things differently. This does not mean that perceptions cannot change. As people are willing to accept new experiences and new knowledge into their worlds, they are able to form new perceptions. Sometimes you call this "changing your mind." When you change your mind to include perceptions that are similar to those of your friends, it strengthens your friendships.

Perceptions help you to create the messages you send to yourself and others, and at the same time, they help you to interpret the messages that you receive. Throughout this book you will learn more about the important role your perceptions play in helping you to decide what messages to send and what messages to accept in developing lasting friendships. You will also learn how the different perceptions of people help to determine whether they will accept or reject messages they receive.

Learning about your perceptions, and the differences you have with people who are close to you, is important. It is particularly important in understanding who you are and why you feel and behave the way that you do. Knowing yourself, therefore, is the first step in getting to know others. To form friendships you need to know about yourself. Who are you? What do you think about yourself? How do you feel about yourself?

The beliefs and feelings that people have about themselves are called their *self-concepts*. In the next chapter you will learn about your self-concept, and how it develops and guides your behaviors.

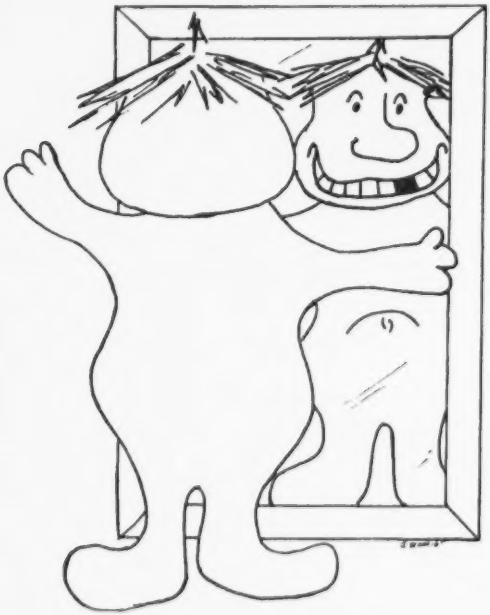
Friendship Activities

1. **Phantom Inviter.** Do some secretive things for your friends. Mail them funny cards, but send them unsigned. Put pieces of candy on their desks at school just before lunch time. There are numerous positive messages you can plan, and who knows, maybe it will catch on and others will begin sending "phantom invitations."
2. **History Lesson.** Ask adults to tell you about their best friends when they were your age. Talk with a grandparent, an aunt, an uncle, a neighbor, or a teacher. Ask them to tell you why they were friends with these persons. Listen carefully as they tell you about their friends and see if you hear them mention the qualities of trust, respect, dependability, optimism, and responsibility.
3. **Friendship List.** Ask your best friend to make a list of all the reasons why he or she is your friend. At the same time, you make your list. When you are both finished, compare your lists and see how many of the items are similar or the same.

Chapter 3
Your Self

Have you looked in a mirror lately? If not, put the book down and go take a look. I'll wait.

Dum, dum, dee, dum ... Huh? Oh, good, you're back! Did you look in the mirror? What did you see? "Myself," did you say? That's right! Actually what you saw when you looked in the mirror was your *physical* self. You saw your *body*—your face, arms, legs, hands, feet, and other features—and all your visible parts that make up the physical "you." But there are other parts of your*self* that you cannot see by looking in a mirror and they are just as important to who you are as is your physical self.



"Hey Gorgeous!"

In this chapter you will learn about the *self*, how it is created, and how it changes. Learning about the self can help you become more aware of your abilities, behaviors, and feelings. This knowledge helps you understand what other people think about you and why they want, or do not want, to be your friend. To understand what your *self* is, it will help to define what *self* means.

What is the Self?

You saw what is meant by the physical self when you looked in the mirror. Can you think of some other parts of your *self*? Depending on how specific you want to be, you can create an endless list. See how many parts you thought about:

physical self (body)
emotional self (feelings)
social self (friendships)
behavioral self (actions)
athletic self (sports)
educated self (studies)
committed self (values and beliefs)
vocational self (jobs and careers)
psychological self (intelligence and mental health)

As you can see from this list, there are many parts of the *self* and each part is important in its own way. The parts are all related to one another. For example, your "behavioral self" (how you behave) is related to your "emotional self" (how you feel). You can probably think of times when you *behaved* "silly" because you *felt* like having fun! Other times you may have *behaved* angrily because you *felt* mad at someone. Each part of your *self* is related in some way to one or more of the other parts.

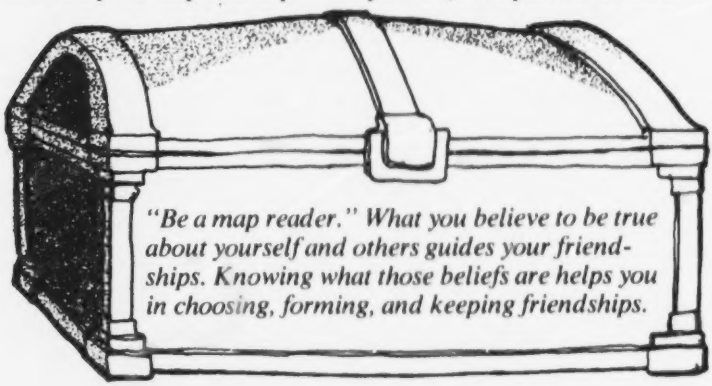
This chapter focuses on three major parts of the self: the physical self, the emotional self, and the behavioral self. Before learning about these three parts, you should know one more thing about the *self*. The *self* consists of facts about you as well as beliefs you hold to be true about yourself.

Facts and Beliefs

Your *self* is not only made up of important parts, but each of these parts consists of two elements: facts and beliefs. Facts are those things you know about yourself. Beliefs, on the other hand, are the ideas that you think are true about those facts. For example, what are some *facts* of your physical self? Are you a boy or girl? Are you black, white, or another skin color? What is the color of your eyes? The answers to these questions provide some *facts* about your physical self. These facts are real and usually cannot be changed. If you are boy, you will grow up to be a man. If you are a girl, you will become a woman. You cannot change your race, and if you have a physical handicap, such as the loss of an arm or leg, you will always have that physical difference.

Beliefs are different than facts. Beliefs are the thoughts you have about facts. While facts, such as those related to the physical self, make up a large part of your*self*, it is the beliefs you have about those facts that give direction to your life. By returning to the examples of the physical self, we can illustrate this point.

Are you a boy or girl? Whichever you are, that is a fact. Now, what do you *think* about being a boy, or a girl? Do you believe it is better to be a boy, or a girl? Your answers to these questions help to determine the beliefs you hold that make up an important part of your*self*. As you learn about



"Be a map reader." What you believe to be true about yourself and others guides your friendships. Knowing what those beliefs are helps you in choosing, forming, and keeping friendships.

your physical, emotional, and behavioral self, keep in mind the differences between your facts and the beliefs that you have about each of those facts.

Physical Self. The physical self, as you learned above, consists of all your bodily parts and, in addition, the beliefs or values that you place on your physical appearance. Therefore, questions that ask you how tall you are, what your hair color is, what you weigh, how many fingers you have, and how big your nose is are all related to the physical self. At the same time, your beliefs about the answers to these questions make up a value system that is also related to your physical self.

As you were reading the questions above, did you have any feelings about the answers? Are you concerned about how tall you are, or how short you are? Do think it is better to be tall or short? Fat or skinny? And what about that nose? The feelings you have about your physical self are related to what you *believe* about yourself.

Everyone has beliefs about their physical selves. Most people would like to be taller or shorter, heavier or skinnier, more handsome or prettier. Sometimes these beliefs are very strong. On occasion, these beliefs are so strong that they prevent people from forming friendships with others. For example, sometimes people think that they are not the right size and therefore no one would want to be their friend. Because they believe this so strongly, they avoid other people. They do not speak to them; they do not even look at other people because they are afraid they will not be liked. When others see you acting this way, they interpret it as meaning that you do not like them. And so, they stay away from you, do not talk to you, and do not invite you to be their friends.

People who are comfortable with their physical selves do not worry about what others think about how they look. As a result, they are more willing to take the risk of approaching others to be their friends. It may be true that some people will make fun of the way you look, but it is only when you begin believing their insults that your physical self will affect your friendships. Acceptance of your physical self is a

first step toward having others accept you. It is also a first step in making friends. When people find that you are comfortable with your appearance—you accept the way you look—most of them will look beyond your physical self to get to know you. The few people who cannot get beyond your physical appearance probably would not make the best of friends for you regardless of how good you looked!

Naturally, you do want to take care of yourself by practicing good hygiene and grooming. These are ways of inviting yourself as well as others personally. You will learn more about inviting yourself personally in Chapter Five.

True friends care about you because of what they find in other parts of your *self*. In particular, true friends will care about how you feel and behave towards them. Your feelings and behaviors are influenced by beliefs and facts that are related to your emotional self and your behavioral self. We will now consider each of these.

Emotional Self. The emotional self is the part of your self-concept that guides your feelings. Your moods, expressed feelings, and unexpressed feelings are all part of your emotions. The emotional self allows you to express sadness, happiness, anger, joy and many other feelings.

As with the physical self, the emotional self has two parts: facts and beliefs. The *facts* are the emotions you express outwardly as well as inwardly. Sometimes the emotions people express on the outside are not the same as the emotions they are feeling on the inside. Have you ever felt sad, but you did not want others to know it so you "pretended" to be happy? The *fact* was that people saw you as happy, but you knew you were sad. Both emotions existed because you wanted them to. Often people disguise their true feelings because of the *beliefs* they have about those emotions.

What you believe about your emotions is as important as the emotions themselves. Your beliefs, as we have seen with the physical self, guide the emotional self and help you to decide which feelings to express to others. A story about a young boy shows how this is so.

The boy went to a very popular movie with a group of adults. The movie was both joyful and sad. As the people were walking out of the theater after the movie, the boy said to one of the men, "Why was everyone crying?" The man replied, "It was a joyous movie and I was moved to tears." The boy thought for a moment and then said, "Well, I didn't cry." The man looked at him and said, "That's okay. People show their emotions in different ways, and it is alright that you didn't cry." They continued walking, and the boy spoke up again and said, "Well, I had one tear, but I held it back!" What the boy seemed to be saying was that he too felt the same emotion, but because he *believed* that "young men shouldn't cry," he held back his expression of the emotion he felt.

"I'm NOT scared!"

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The example above shows how powerful our beliefs can be in influencing our behaviors. Frequently people behave in certain ways, not because of what is factual, but rather because of what they believe about it. The next section emphasizes this point by describing the behavioral self.

Behavioral Self. People have many behaviors that make up their behavioral selves. Think of the different behaviors you have used today. Need a list? Try this list out and see how many of these behaviors you used today:

reading	arguing
sleeping	loving
pretending	helping
fighting	smiling
studying	avoiding
talking	lying
running	

The list could go on and on. How many did you use today? The behaviors that you checked are facts. You actually used them. You know you did. They are facts, and as you have learned about other parts of the self, facts are important to the behavioral self. So are beliefs.

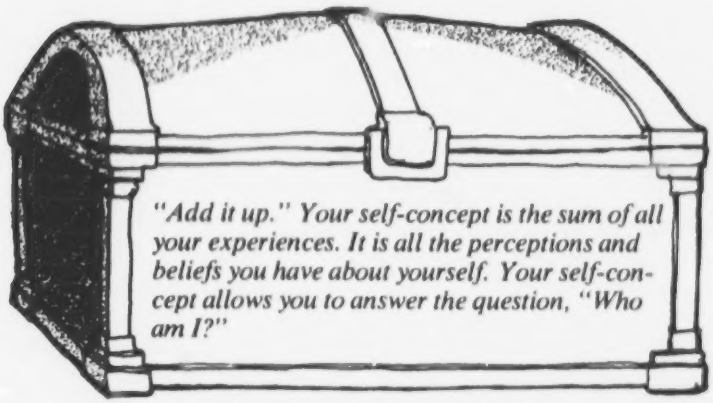
Those behaviors you believe are important are the ones that you will use most often. If you think that smiling is good for your relationships with others, then you will smile. On the other hand if you think frowning will help you get your way, then you will frown often. The beliefs you have about your behaviors play an important role in the friendships you form with others. They also play an important role in determining how lasting your friendships will be. This can be seen in the story of Allison.

Allison was a very likeable girl who made many friends in school and in her neighborhood. She often approached new children and welcomed them to school or her neighborhood. Allison acted very friendly toward them and this behavior won her many new friends. Unfortunately, her friendships did not last a very long time. In part, this was

due to Allison's strong belief that she was going to lose all her friends. So that she would not lose them, Allison would use "fibbing" behaviors to exaggerate her own importance.

One day a friend named Joshua said that his dad was buying a new car. Allison replied that her dad also was buying a new car and it was going to be "very expensive." Later, Joshua found out that Allison's dad was not buying a car at all. He began to doubt Allison's sincerity and when she sensed this, she began telling more fibs to win his friendship. You can guess what happened. Allison's fibs turned Joshua away from her and their friendship ended.

As you can see, the behaviors you choose and the beliefs you have play a vital role in the friendships you make and keep. All of the various parts of your self—all the facts and beliefs—combine to form a view of your *self* that is called your *self-concept*. Your self-concept and the important parts of your self-concept help to determine the types of friendships you will form.



"Add it up." Your self-concept is the sum of all your experiences. It is all the perceptions and beliefs you have about yourself. Your self-concept allows you to answer the question, "Who am I?"

Now that you understand what the self-concept is and how it influences your friendships, you will learn how people develop their self-concepts. The self-concept is not something that you can see or touch. It is simply an idea of how people use their perceptions to develop a view of themselves and others.

Where Does the SELF Come From?

The self-concept is learned. From the time you were born until the time you die, you will learn things about yourself, the world, and the people around you. This learning is made up of all your experiences and the meaning that you give to those experiences. In the second chapter of this book you read that your "perceptions" are the ways you see and understand things around you. Perceptions are the meaning that you give to your experiences.

People perceive their experiences through all of their senses. So, everything you see, hear, touch, smell, and taste is evaluated and brought into your world of experiences. This world of experiences, with its own personalized meaning, is your self-concept. Because your perceptions differ from those of other people, your senses provide different evaluations of similar experiences. This is how self-concepts develop in ways that allow people to be different from each other. You can see this by noting how differently people react to the same movies, how they prefer a wide variety of music, how they differ in the ways that they touch others or want to be touched by others, and how they like different fragrances and the tastes of many types of foods. Because of these differences, self-concepts are very unique. No two people have self-concepts that are exactly alike.

Because your self-concept consists of things you have learned from all of your experiences in life, it takes a while for it to be fully developed. That does not mean that early experiences are unimportant. On the contrary, many of the opinions you have formed about yourself early in life will continue unchanged for many years, and maybe for as long as you live. For that reason your early years of growing are very important to becoming a healthy person. They are particularly important to your beliefs about friendships.

When people are young, they bring many friendship experiences into their self-concepts. Some of these experiences are happy and some are sad. If the majority of these experiences are happy ones, then it is likely that people will

see themselves as being able to make friends and have enjoyable friendships. On the other hand, when people place more importance on their sad experiences, then they may see themselves as not very friendly or as being unable to make friends because others have rejected them.

Sometimes young children say, "Nobody wants to be my friend." When feelings like that are brought into their self-concepts, children might behave in *un*friendly ways. Remember, it is the beliefs people hold that guide their behavior.

Think about yourself for a moment. Can you remember a time when a friend rejected you? Perhaps it was someone who told you that he or she was not going to be your friend any more. If you remember an experience like that, it is probably still painful to think about it today, even though it may have happened a long time ago.

Now think of what it might be like if you had many experiences like that painful one. How do you think you would feel about forming new friendships? How much would you trust the few friends you had? If you walked into a room full of people whom you did not know, how do you think you would behave? You probably would not make friends easily. In addition, if your past friendships had not been trustworthy, it might be hard to find new friends to trust.

As you can see, the friendships you form and keep in your life are greatly influenced by how you have been "invited" in past friendships as well as how you have "invited" others. If people receive many positive messages about friendships, those messages are brought into their self-concepts and they believe that they are friendly people. If on the other hand they are "disinvited" in their attempts to form friendships or they consistently reject others, then they may have very negative and unfriendly feelings about themselves and others.

Sometimes friendships change. You saw an example of this earlier in the story about Allison. Sometimes people whom

you like stop being your friends, and others whom you think you dislike become your new friends. You might wonder how this is so. Does your self-concept change to allow this to happen? This is a very important question which we will now consider.

Can the SELF Change?

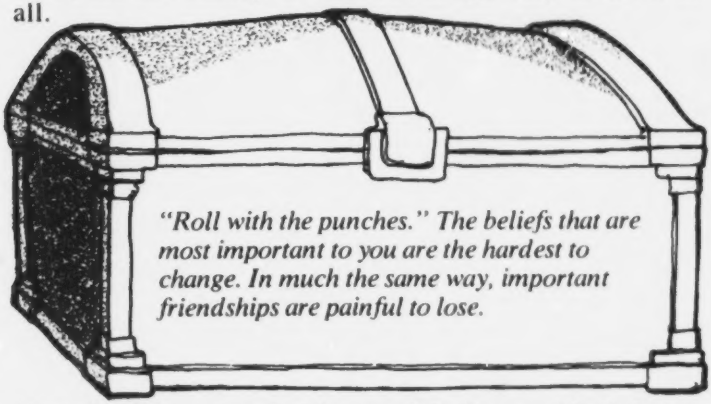
As was mentioned earlier, the self-concept is not something you can see or hold. It is not a piece of luggage that you carry around by the handle. The self-concept is an "idea" of how people grow and develop. Because you cannot see it or touch it, there are many questions about the self-concept that are difficult to answer. One of these questions is whether or not the self-concept can change. It can, but not always easily or quickly.

Just as it takes the self-concept many years to form, it sometimes takes a long while for it to change. This might seem confusing because you know that you have changed your mind about many things. Friendships, for example, sometimes change very quickly. When friendships change, does the self-concept also change? Perhaps, but it changes very little. Although it can change, the self-concept is fairly stable. If it was not stable, people would tend to change too often and too quickly, and their lives would be very confusing! The self-concept changes slowly as new perceptions and experiences are accepted.

Remember what makes up the self-concept? The self-concept consists of your *perceptions* of your experiences. These perceptions allow you to form beliefs about yourself and others. So, friendships that you form are based not only on your views of certain people, but also on the beliefs that you hold about yourself and others. When you break a friendship, it may change a perception you have about a particular person, but it does not necessarily change the beliefs you have about all your friends. For example, if you find out a very close friend has been lying to you, your opinion of that person may change and your trust may be broken; but only for that one person, not for all people. You will still be able to trust and believe others, and they in turn will believe you. In this way, your self-concept remains fairly stable.

If people break friendships often, or if they lose very close friends, their self-concepts could change. To understand how this happens, think of yourself listening to your favorite music on the radio. When you are listening to the music and the radio is nearby, you are very attentive to it, maybe even to the point of singing along. If someone comes by and turns off the radio, you notice it right away, and say, "Hey, I was listening to that!" At that point you are saying, "This music is important to me!" Without your favorite music, there is an emptiness around you. In much the same way, you would feel badly if you lost a very close friend who was an important part of your life. There would be an emptiness that might alter some views you have of yourself and your friendships. Your self-concept might change.

But what happens when you are listening to your music and you get up and walk out of the room? The further away you walk, the less you notice the music. If you went to another part of the house or outside and someone went into your room and turned off the radio, you would not notice it because you were no longer hearing it. It is similar when you break up friendships that are not as important to you. Just as the music was further away from you, some friendships are further away in their importance to you, and therefore they are easier to change without disrupting your beliefs about yourself or about other friendships. In such cases, the self-concept would not change very much, if at all.



"Roll with the punches." The beliefs that are most important to you are the hardest to change. In much the same way, important friendships are painful to lose.

How the self-concept develops and the facts and beliefs that make up your self-concept play an important role in the friendships you make. To understand this better, you need to examine the *self* and friendships a little closer.

The Self and Friendships

At this point you may be asking, "What does all of this self-concept stuff have to do with friendship?" This is a good question which we will now try to answer. To do so, let us review a few things you have learned about the self-concept.

First, the *self* consists of facts and beliefs. Facts are those features about yourself that are real. Beliefs are the ideas that you have about yourself.

Second, you have seen that the self-concept is learned through the many experiences in your life. It is learned by compiling numerous perceptions about yourself and the world around you. Perceptions that "fit" your beliefs about yourself are *accepted* into your self-concept, but perceptions that "do not fit" with your beliefs are *rejected*. If you understand about the self-concept, its parts and how it is formed, then you will have a better understanding of the friendships you have made and will continue to make in your life.

Reflections of the Self

Your friendships are, in a way, reflections of your self-concept. The beliefs you hold about yourself and the world around you are frequently similar to the beliefs held by your friends. As you learned earlier, to some extent this is why you are friends with each other. You tend to like the same things and agree on many issues. For example, if you really like to play sports, chances are good that your best friends like to play sports too. If you are a good student in school, your best friends are probably good students also. People become friends because they "see" things that they have in common with each other. In this way your friendships validate who you think you are.

Sometimes you can be confused by friendships that are formed by people you know. Have you ever said something like, "How can Sally be friends with Roger? He's so weird!" You see Roger in a different way than Sally sees him. She has found a way that he "fits" into her world and therefore she can form a friendship with him. In order for you to do the same, you would have to examine some of the beliefs you hold and decide whether or not you want to change any of them. As you learned earlier, by changing some of your beliefs you can change your self-concept, and that change may allow you to form a friendship with Roger. Of course Roger has something to say about this too! The friendship can be formed only if both of you want it.

Changing Friendships

Because friendships mirror our self-concepts, they tend to change as our perceptions and self-concepts change. Think back about two or three years ago. How many of your close friends today were your friends a few years ago? If you are like most young people, your self-concept is developing and changing in ways that allow you to move in and out of many friendships. Naturally there are other factors besides your self-concept that contribute to your changing friendships. These include moving to a new town, changing schools, and joining new clubs or sport activities. Chances are that even if you never moved, changed schools, or joined new groups, your friendships would still change, even slightly, from year to year. This is so because you are changing.

Knowing that your self-concept changes and contributes to your friendships raises the question, "How can you be sure that your friendships are good for you?" Everyone wants friendships that will be helpful to them. Nobody wants a "friend" who will harm them. How do you insure that you have chosen good friends?

There are no guaranteed ways of knowing, but by having a better understanding of yourself, planning the messages that you send to others, and examining the messages that others send to you, you have a good chance of choosing helpful friendships. These messages, as you have seen in Chapter Two, are the invitations and disinvitations that you send and receive every day. Understanding how these messages contribute to the development of your self-concept is the first step in understanding how they will influence your friendships.

The Self and Invitations

In the second chapter of this book you learned that invitations are positive and helpful messages, while disinvitations are negative and harmful messages. The self-concept is greatly influenced by the messages that a person receives. In addition, the self guides each person in determining what

types of messages he or she will send. In this way the relationship between positive and negative messages and the self-concept is cyclical—like a revolving door.

Do you know what a revolving door is? It is one of those doors that you sometimes see at department stores. It goes around in a circle and there are several compartments to fit several people at one time. By using a revolving door, people can go into the store through the same doorway by which others are coming out. Shoppers go in and shoppers go out. If you view the self-concept as having a revolving door, you could say that the types of messages that go into the door are the same types that go out.

Revolving Door

If good and beneficial messages are sent to you and you accept them, then in all likelihood you will send beneficial messages in return. On the other hand, if you always receive mean and nasty messages, then you may become a person who always sends those kinds of messages to others. More importantly, you will also send those kinds of messages to yourself.

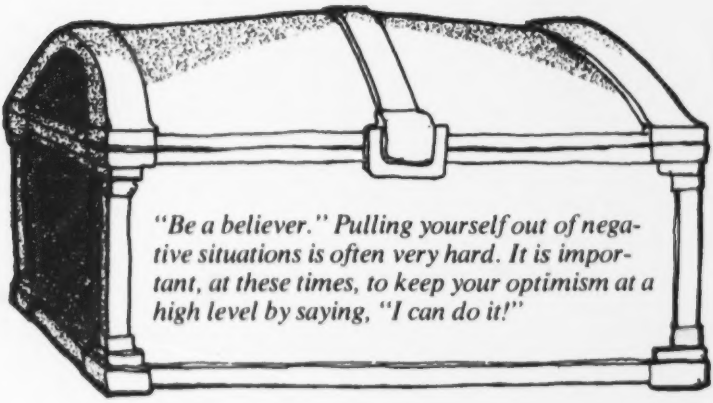
Sadly, there are some people who are sent very few positive messages. As a result, they have learned to accept the only messages they receive, which frequently are negative and harmful ones. The more negative they feel about themselves, the less they will be able to send positive messages. In this way the revolving door continues spinning out of control. Remember what you learned in Chapter Two about *intentionality* and *unintentionality*? Sometimes people become unintentionally "trapped" in situations, like revolving doors. The longer they stay trapped, the more difficult it is for them to change things.

The longer you are trapped in a "negative" revolving door, the more difficult it is to get out. You keep spinning and spinning, and feel like you are losing control. It is much the same way with your self-concept and negative beliefs. The

more you believe negative things about yourself (even though some of them may be unintentional), the more likely it is that you will lose control of your positive behaviors and begin behaving in very negative ways, sending *intentional* disinvitations to everyone around you.

"Help!"

It is important to learn how to help yourself out of negative situations. To do that you need to have control of the revolving door to your self-concept. One way to gain control is by learning to "invite" yourself.


"Be a believer." Pulling yourself out of negative situations is often very hard. It is important, at these times, to keep your optimism at a high level by saying, "I can do it!"

Inviting the Self

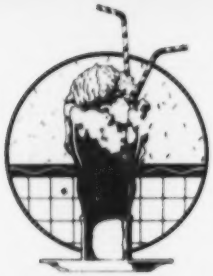
Everyone from time to time gets caught in a revolving door that sends them negative messages. You know this is happening when you begin to put yourself down and say things like, "I am stupid. No wonder no one wants to be my friend." What is most interesting is that the more negative you feel about yourself, the less likely it will be that others want to invite you. No one wants to be friends with a *grump*!

For that reason, it is important to learn how to send inviting messages to yourself. If you do good things for yourself, you can maintain your confidence. Confidence gives you an *optimistic* stance, and as you know, optimism helps you make friends. A wise lesson is that friendship begins at home, with yourself. If you invite your*self*, then you are in an optimal position to be invited by others. In contrast, if you constantly disinvite yourself, then you will be disinvited, or at best ignored, by others. You will learn more about inviting your*self* in Chapter Five of this book.

As you can see, positive messages are very powerful in forming the self-concept and in developing friendships. So, how do you do it? How do you send these positive messages? In the next chapter, you will read about the ways you invite yourself and others. You will learn about the inviting process.

Friendship Activities

1. **Self-concept List**. Make a list of seven of the most important things in your life. Your list might consist of people, objects, ideas, or other things. Ask a best friend to make a list also. Compare your two lists and see what things are important to each of you. What are the similarities and differences on your lists? Now cross off three things on your list, and ask your friend to do the same. Compare and talk about the items you each have left. This activity will help you get to know your*self* and your friend's *self* a little better.
2. **Picture Yourself**. Draw a picture of your self-concept. Use your imagination. It can be a picture of anything you choose. Show your picture to a friend or family member, and explain to them in what way the picture shows your self-concept.
3. **Give a Performance**. Look in a mirror and act out different feelings you express. See yourself. This is the way that others see you. Now pretend that inside you feel unhappy, but on the outside you are trying not to show it. How do you look? Try doing this with other feelings like anger, disappointment, excitement, and others. It is interesting to look at yourself when you are trying not to show the feelings you have inside.
4. **Friendship Resume**. A resume is a description of yourself that you prepare when looking for a job. Employers read your resume, and decide whether or not to give you an interview. Prepare a resume of yourself as if your were applying for a "friendship." List your positive qualities and experiences. Decide what to put on your resume to attract helpful friendships for yourself.



Chapter 4
Inviting

Knowing about friendship, invitations, and self-concept is important, but without the understanding of how to use that knowledge, you might not develop friendships or improve your*self* as much as you want. Using your knowledge means having a plan. A plan helps you to maintain a direction and purpose in your life. That is why it is important to learn about the process of inviting. Learning about it will allow you to plan ways for developing your friendships.

In the first three chapters you learned about friends and friendship, about invitations and disinvitations, and about your self-concept. This chapter takes the knowledge you have gained from these earlier chapters and helps you to use it. You will now learn about the process of sending positive messages and how that process can help you choose, form, and keep friendships. This chapter will focus on the questions of how, when, and whom to invite.

How to Invite

Learning how to invite is relatively simple. However, being an inviting person can sometimes be very difficult! This may sound like a puzzle, but it is true. Learning the steps of the inviting process is not very hard, but putting the process to use everyday is a challenge. It is much like a demonstration that a friend of mine uses to show how things that sometimes look simple can often be very complex. My friend's name is Dr. John Novak and he is a professor at Brock University in Canada. Because he is a friend, I have named this exercise the "Novak Shuffle." Try it to see if you think it is a good demonstration of how some things that look simple are actually difficult to do.

Here is how to do it:

First, take your left hand and put it on your nose. That's right, hold your nose with your left hand. Next, take your right hand and hold your left ear. Got it? Okay, that is the simple part. Now, at the count of three you are going to reverse the positions of your hands. You will put your right hand on your nose and your left hand on your *right* ear. Ready? One, two, three, go!

"Doing the Novak Shuffle."

How did you do? Hope you didn't hurt yourself. If you were not successful on the first try, by all means go back a try again! If you were successful, congratulations! You might want to try it with a group of friends or your family to see if they think it is "simple" or "difficult." Sometimes things that are simple to one person appear quite different to others. As you will remember, this is due, in part, to the different *perceptions* that people have. Understanding that people have different perceptions is important when deciding what friendship messages to send. Learning about the steps of the inviting process helps you send the most successful messages.

Wanting to

The first step of the inviting process is "wanting to" invite yourself or others. Sounds simple doesn't it? Sometimes it is simple because you really *want to* do something, or you really *want to* be with someone. Other times it is more difficult to "want to" invite because you are not sure of the situation or the people around you. For example, if someone asks you to go water skiing and you have never water skied before, you might hesitate to say "yes" because you are uncertain about it. You would not be sure that you "want to" accept. However, if after you review the situation, you realize that the risk is not too great and feel that you would like the new experience of learning how to ski on water, then you might "want to." This "wanting to" would enable you to accept the invitation.

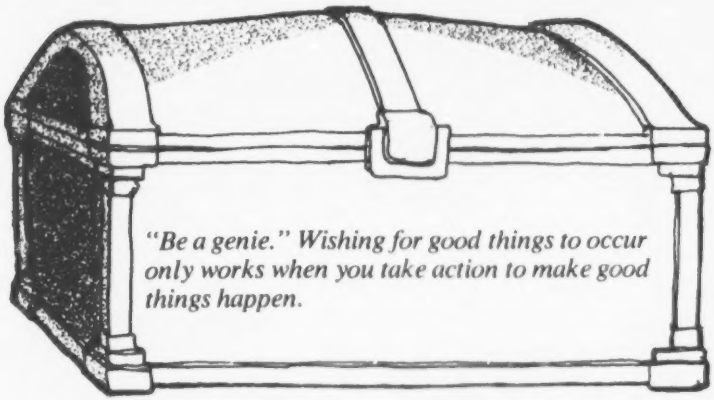
The above example shows how "wanting to" plays a role when you accept friendly messages. "Wanting to" also plays a part when you *send* messages to yourself or others. Please return to the above example and you will see how this is so.

Your friends who asked you to go water skiing "wanted to" have you with them to enjoy the fun together. If they had not wanted to be with you, they would not have asked you to go. In this way "wanting to" plays a most important role in developing friendships. You have to "want to" *send* and *accept* invitations if you are going to have friendships.

Earlier you learned that inviting can look simple, but it may be difficult to do. "Wanting to" may seem simple, but can you think of reasons why it might be hard to "want to" invite yourself or another person? One reason that people do not send positive messages to themselves or others is because they do not think they *can*. In Chapter One you saw how saying "I can" relates to being optimistic. Optimism is also part of "wanting to."

Have you ever "wanted to" do something but decided not to do it because you did not feel that you were able enough? At times like that you may have said, "I can't do that!" Sometimes when people are unsure or scared about doing some-

thing new, they are quick to excuse themselves with the "I can't!" pronouncement. In those cases, people might really "want to," but their feelings about what others might think block them from going ahead and trying it. What they actually mean when they say "I can't" is "I'm afraid" or simply "I won't do it." People also say "I can't" to themselves. This is negative self-talk that allows them to give themselves an excuse for not trying something. You will learn more about self-talk in the next chapter of this book.



"Be a genie." Wishing for good things to occur only works when you take action to make good things happen.

Having the desire to invite yourself and others and developing a willingness to act on that desire are necessary parts of the first step in the inviting process. Only when people want to do things, and behave accordingly, will they be able to move to the second step of choosing appropriate messages to send. This next step is called "creating the invitation."

Creating the Invitation

Once you have decided that you want to do something for yourself or with other people, the next step is to design and create the message or messages that are needed to carry out your desires. Having the desire leads to creating the invitation.

In this step you decide what you want to have happen for yourself or others. Once that decision is made, you can proceed with the creation of an appropriate invitation. Creat-

ing an invitation requires answers to a few simple questions: Who? What? When? To answer these questions, you may need additional information so that the invitation you create is indeed successful. Remember, sometimes you may *intend* good things to happen, but you *unintentionally* disinvite yourself and others because you fail to plan properly. For that reason, creating an invitation requires that you do two things: read the situation and set the stage. Let us now consider each of these phases.

Reading the situation. To invite appropriately you have to know who it is you are planning to invite. This means that if you are going to ask others to do something with you, you need to know them well enough to know their likes and dislikes, needs, and desires. You have to "read the situation" to acquire this knowledge about other people.

For example, think about a surprise party. Suppose you decided to throw a surprise birthday party for a friend. You planned the party well, invited many people whom your friend enjoyed, and kept the secret until the lights were turned on and your friend was caught in surprise. Unfortunately, one thing you did not realize was that your friend *hates* surprises. Because you did not "read the situation" by taking the time to learn how your friend feels about being surprised, the party became a disinviting experience for both you and your friend.

Other examples of misreading situations and sending inappropriate messages are: giving candy to a friend who has been having dental problems and whose dentist has instructed to stay away from sweets; asking people to join an outing without first checking with the rest of the group; offering ice cream to someone who is trying to lose weight; and helping yourself to the supply of paper in your classroom before checking with the teacher to see if others might need some. Reading the situation increases the likelihood that appropriate messages can be created and sent. To create the most beneficial message, preparations need to be made; the stage needs to be set.

Setting the stage. Having the necessary information to create an invitation leads you to the phase called "setting the stage." Let us return to the example of a surprise party, and you will see what this phase is all about.

Assume that you have read the situation properly and you know that your friend *loves* surprises. The next step in creating an appropriate invitation would include planning the party, inviting the guests, buying the refreshments, choosing the location, and "inventing" a story that will get your friend unknowingly to the party. All of these events help to "set the stage" for a successful surprise.

Every invitation requires a setting of the stage. Even when you send an invitation that requires little thought or planning, you still want the message to be successful, and that means being sure it is appropriate for the person, the time, and the place. That is what reading the situation and setting the stage are all about—being sure that the messages you create and send are right for the people, places, and times that you intended. When you have decided that the situation is right and the stage is set, then you can proceed to the next step and *send* the invitation.

Sending the Invitation

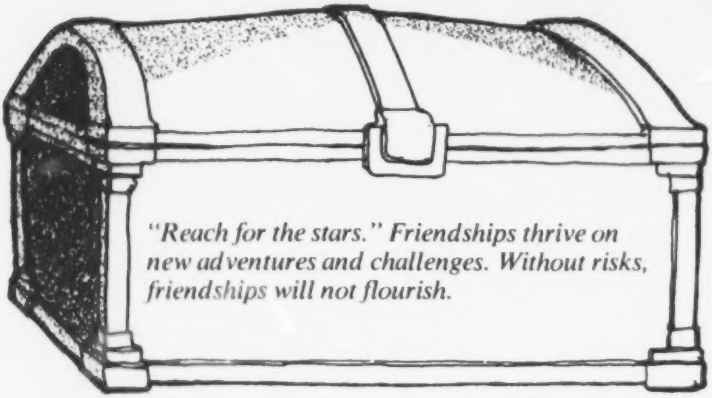
It may seem silly to have a step called "sending the invitation" because you think that if it is not sent, then it is not an invitation. This is true. Frequently you hear people say, "Oh, it is good to see you! I've been meaning to invite you over." By making such statements, people are saying that they have "wanted to" invite, and may have even "created" an invitation, but have not got around to sending it. For messages to be received, they must first be sent.

There are many reasons why people do not send friendly messages that they have created. Sometimes they forget. For example, you might be saving money for an important purchase and each week you intend to put a dollar in your bank. But you forget a couple of times to put money in the bank and when the time comes to make the purchase, you

are short the amount of money that you need. You forgot to send yourself the necessary invitations to acquire sufficient funds.

"Short of funds."

People's feelings also can block them from sending invitations. You have learned that it takes courage to invite yourself and others. If you are thinking about doing something new, difficult, or risky, such as singing for a show, entering a science fair, or learning how to dance, you will need courage to send yourself the invitation. Likewise, when you send invitations to others, you face the risk of being turned down, and it takes courage to chance being rejected.



"Reach for the stars." Friendships thrive on new adventures and challenges. Without risks, friendships will not flourish.

Sending invitations can be risky, but it is wise to take such risks. If you are going to form friendships, messages will have to be created and sent. People who fail to take the chance to invite themselves and others cannot be expected to develop many friendships. This can be seen in a story about a teenage boy who was new to the neighborhood.

The boy wanted to find some friends, but every time he thought about going over to the houses of neighborhood teens who lived on his street, he would decide not to go. He was unsure about how the others would treat him. As a result, the boy became unhappy with his new home and complained to his parents that there was nothing to do and nobody liked him. He would say to his mother, "I don't like this town because I have no friends." In fact, what he was really saying by his behaviors was, "I am scared to make new friends." Fortunately, there was a girl in his neighborhood who had the courage to go over to the new boy's house and introduce herself. From that invitation the two became friends and the new boy was introduced to other teenagers in the neighborhood.

As you can see from this story, sending messages is very important. An invitation that is never sent is not an invitation. It is just a good idea. Sending a positive message, however, does not complete the process. There is another step, and that is to be sure the message that is sent also has been received.

Checking for Reception

Sometimes messages are sent but never received. Have you ever heard of letters getting lost in the mail? The same can be said for invitations. People with good intentions sometimes send messages that are never received by others. This happens most frequently because of miscommunications. That is a big word, miscommunications, but it is the reason why many friendships never happen, or even worse, why some friendships end unhappily.

Miscommunications are messages and signals that you say or do and are misunderstood, not heard, or never received by the people for whom you intended them. It is important not only to send invitations but also to check and be sure that the invitations have been received properly. The following story shows what can happen when messages are sent but not checked for reception.

Robin, an eighth grade student, was assigned a team project for social studies with three other students in her class. The class projects were supposed to focus on Asia, the continent the class was studying. Robin and her group decided to build a model of of the Great Wall of China for their project. The other students, Bernice, Todd, and Hector, decided to meet at Todd's house after school to begin planning the project. Robin was at the Media Center when they decided, so they put a note on her desk telling her to meet at Todd's house. While Robin was gone, however, another student accidentally bumped her desk and the note fell on the floor. When Robin returned to the class she never saw the note. As a result she did not meet Bernice, Todd, and Hector to plan the project.

If you think Robin's classmates were upset with her, you are right. They thought she did not meet with them because she wanted them to do all the planning! When Bernice, Todd, and Hector arrived at school the next day, they complained to Robin. Even when she explained that she never saw the note, they were not too sure she was telling the truth. The miscommunication, simply caused by a lost note, led to

anger and distrust in their relationship. If her friends had checked to be sure that Robin read their note, none of those feelings would have dampened their relationship or hindered the work on their project.

On occasion invitations are sent and received, but not accepted. When this happens, the person who sends needs to find out why the friendly message has not be accepted. If changes can be made in the message to make it more acceptable, then the person sending should make those changes. This is the next step of the inviting process—negotiating change.

Negotiating Change

Not all invitations are accepted. Sometimes people cannot accept a message because they have already made other plans, they cannot afford to accept, they are unsure about it, or they need more information about it. When this happens, it is best to find out what can be changed about the message to make it more acceptable.

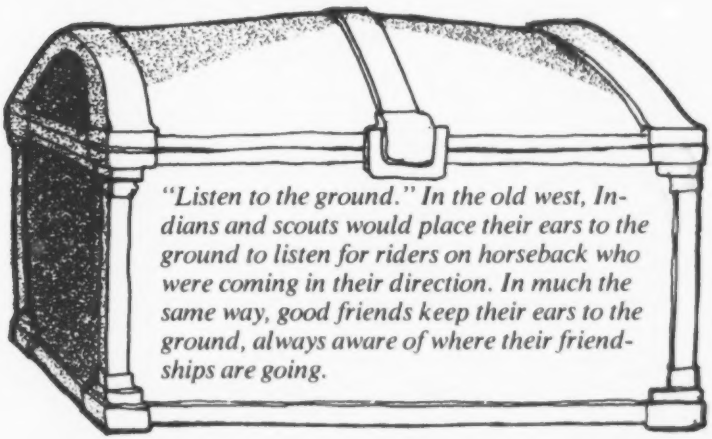
Perhaps a different time or place needs to be considered for the invitation to be accepted. For example, if you ask a friend over for dinner but the friend's family has already made plans for the evening, maybe another time could be offered for the dinner invitation. Usually you can tell that a person wants to negotiate another invitation if he or she says, "Maybe we could do it another time," or something similar to that.

Offering to change or adjust an invitation to make it more acceptable allows the door to friendship to remain open. When you are flexible with the messages you send to others, they respect your willingness to create messages that fit their situations. In an earlier chapter of this book, you learned that people only accept those things that "fit" into their world as they see it. Your willingness to adjust your messages to "fit" into a friend's world will generally be warmly accepted and will help you to make more friends. Acceptance of your invitations leads to the last step of the inviting process. In the final step you evaluate the result of your invitations. This is called "keeping score."

Keeping Score

Any message that is inviting should bring positive results. The purpose of creating and sending invitations is to help yourself and others develop friendly relationships to share life experiences. An invitation should provide a happy, joyful, exciting, learning, or other beneficial experience for you and others to whom you send it. To check your success in creating and sending invitations, you want to measure in some way how beneficial they are for yourself and your friends.

Keeping score simply means checking to see that everything has gone according to plan and that everyone has benefited from the invitation. Sometimes positive outcomes are obvious because people express their pleasure openly. For example, if you invite a friend to spend the night and together you play games, watch television, laugh at funny stories, and enjoy each other's company, it is easy to see that the invitation has been successful.



"Listen to the ground." In the old west, Indians and scouts would place their ears to the ground to listen for riders on horseback who were coming in their direction. In much the same way, good friends keep their ears to the ground, always aware of where their friendships are going.

Sometimes it is more difficult to measure the outcome of an invitation. This is particularly true when the results of an invitation will not be seen for a long time. An example of this can be seen in the story of Elmo. He was a boy who was always in trouble in school.

One day Elmo was sent to the principal's office for misbehaving in class. While the principal was talking with him, he noticed that Elmo kept looking at all the live green plants in the office. The principal said, "Do you like plants, Elmo?" Elmo shrugged and said, "I don't know, I've never had a plant." The principal told Elmo that he could have any plant in the office. He asked only that Elmo be sure to take care of the plant so it would not die. Elmo chose a plant and the principal taught him how to care for it.

Now one of the immediate results of this invitation by the principal was that he and Elmo became friends and their friendship helped Elmo behave better in school. But another result was not noticed for several years. During his senior year in high school, Elmo decided he wanted to continue his studies in college to major in botany. Do you know what botany is? That is right! It is the study of plant life!

The story of Elmo illustrates all the steps of the inviting process: wanting to, creating, sending, checking reception, negotiating, and keeping score. Each step of the process is important to the development of friendships. Now that you have learned the steps of inviting, it is time to learn about when to invite.

When to Invite

When people decide to send positive messages to themselves and others, there are choices to be made. These choices can be narrowed down to four: when to send, when *not* to send, when to accept, and when *not* to accept. This may seem like a riddle, but it is not. You have already learned that sending an invitation is very important. Now you will learn that a second and equally important choice is *not* sending an invitation. In addition to these two choices you have about sending friendly messages, there are also two choices to make when you receive messages: to accept or *not* to accept. Let us first explore sending one more time.

Sending

Earlier you learned that for an invitation to *be* an invitation it needs to be sent. Positive messages cannot be realized by your friends if you never send them. Having the desire and creating an invitation only in your mind do little to develop friendships. Friendship messages must be delivered and received if friendships are to be formed.

You also learned that sending invitations takes courage because sometimes they are not accepted. When this happens, you may wonder why, and you may even feel rejected. It will help you to have the courage to send invitations if you remember these points:

1. Not all invitations can be accepted. Sometimes people cannot accept because they do not have the time, or part of the invitation does not suit them.
2. Nonacceptance of an invitation does not mean that the inviter is rejected. Sometimes people honestly cannot accept, but they very much want you to invite them again at another time, or in a different way.
3. Some people have a very difficult time accepting invitations. There are people who repeatedly tell you that they "just can't accept" your invitations. While it will be difficult, you must be persistent. If you really want to be friends, keep trying. Look for just the right invitation, and if you persist gently with their best welfare in mind, someday you may be successful in having your invitation accepted. You may win a good friend for life!
4. When in doubt, send. If you have created a message that you are certain your friend will like, but you are uncertain your friend will accept, by all means send it. It is best to send something for your friend to consider rather than to have it stay in your back pocket! Sending the message allows the opportunity for you and your friend to "negotiate" any changes so that a new invitation can be created, sent, and accepted.

Not Sending

While it is true that an invitation must be sent, you will also remember that perception, a person's point of view, plays an important role in determining what is inviting and what is disinviting. Sometimes people create messages that they think are positive, but the people who receive the messages look at them quite differently. Usually this happens when people do not take the time to "read the situation" so that they can send the most appropriate messages. This occurs when people are *unintentional* in their behaviors. When you are unsure about the appropriateness of a message, it may be best not to send it. An example of not sending would be when you go over to a friend's house to ask her out to play softball, but because she is studying for a math test, you decide to ask her at another, more convenient time.

As you can see, sending and not sending are two choices people make when they think about inviting themselves or others. In the same way, people who receive messages must decide to accept or not accept.

Accepting

Receiving invitations is wonderful, but it is not without responsibility. The first responsibility is to decide whether or not the invitation can, and should be accepted. Can you think of times that people invited you, and you thought about whether or not to accept? Some of the questions you may have asked yourself when thinking about these messages were:

* Is this going to be good for me?
* Will my parents let me?
* Do I have the time to do this?
* Is this going to be dangerous?
* Will I get scared?
* Will I be embarrassed?

Accepting invitations requires some of the same conditions that sending does. It requires courage because when you say

"yes," you trust that their intentions are honest and they will follow through with their messages. As you can see, the courage it takes to accept an invitation is related to the element of trust, which you have learned is so necessary in forming and keeping friendships. When you accept an invitation, you place your trust in the person who has sent it. As you saw earlier, developing trust is not only important in establishing relationships, but it is also essential in maintaining lasting friendships.

Having trust in the sender is particularly important when you are uncertain about the message you have received. If you trust the sender, the same rule that applies to sending messages also applies to accepting them: when in doubt, accept. Of course the opposite is also true. If you do not trust the sender and you doubt the appropriateness of a message, it may be best *not* to accept. This brings us to the last of the four choices.

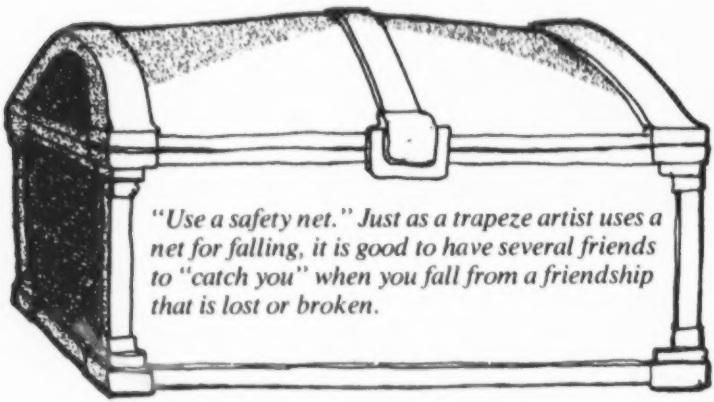
Not Accepting

At times the best thing you can do is not accept an invitation. Just as there are times when it is best not to send someone an invitation, it is also right for you not to accept some of the messages you receive. Accepting something from someone when you know it is not his or hers to give, joining friends after school when your family is expecting you home, inviting a friend for dinner without first asking your parents, and hanging out with a group that usually gets into trouble are a few examples of messages that should be reconsidered, and probably not accepted.

When you are trying to establish new friendships, it is particularly difficult not to accept friendly messages. When messages jeopardize other friendships or family trust, however, they should not be accepted. Accepting them is *disinviting* to yourself and others.

Occasionally in friendships there comes a time when you must decide not to continue the relationship. We call this "breaking up." As the old song goes, sometimes "breaking up is hard to do," but a friendship that is no longer helpful

to you, or is harmful to you, is really no longer a friendship. It is an abuse of your faith and trust. Such abuse must be rejected, and the friendship no longer accepted. This brings us to a final question about the inviting process: whom should you invite?



"Use a safety net." Just as a trapeze artist uses a net for falling, it is good to have several friends to "catch you" when you fall from a friendship that is lost or broken.

Whom to Invite

So far in this chapter you have learned how to invite and when to invite. How to invite involves the steps of inviting yourself and others, and when to invite includes the four choices of sending, not sending, accepting, and not accepting invitations. In concluding this chapter, we will now consider *whom* to invite. You might think that positive messages are good for everyone, so you should send them to everyone. You may be right, but it is good to consider with whom invitations should begin.

Yourself

To become a close friend with others, you must first become friends with yourself. This may seem obvious, but for many people it is very difficult. Some people do not like themselves.

People who do not feel good about themselves cannot have the courage, trust, optimism, self-respect, responsibility, and intentionality to develop caring relationships. Clearly, invitations start at home. The last chapter of this book will examine ways to send positive, friendly messages to yourself.

"I invited MYSELF!"

Family

A second group to whom you can send friendly messages is your family. Include in your family all your immediate relatives—parents, sisters, brothers, grandparents—as well as relatives in your extended family—cousins, aunts, uncles, and others (Oh yes, don't forget the family pets!). You need support in life and one of the main sources of support comes from those who love you. Learning to invite these loving relationships is a first step to learning how to invite friendships.

Friends

Returning to an illustration used earlier in this book, you have learned that developing friendships is like cultivating flower gardens. You have to provide the right ingredients so that your garden produces beautiful flowers. Just as flowers need enough water, good soil, sufficient fertilizer, and appropriate sunshine, friendships need a variety of invitations. By consistently inviting your friends in different ways, you will be able to strengthen relationships with them. Friendships that are not nurtured and cared for will, like flower gardens, wither and die away.

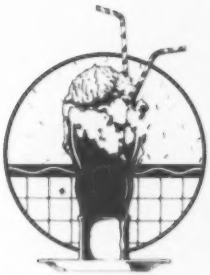
Others

Invitations are important to developing lasting friendships. They are also important in day to day relationships with others. You may not want to form deep relationships with everyone you meet, but by being consistently inviting toward others, you will contribute to the improvement of the community and to the betterment of your fellow students, neighbors, and society. By sending messages in this way, you will also discover that new and unexpected friendships develop. Someone once said, "Your dearest friend in all the world was once a total stranger."

By inviting family, friends, and others, you will be in a strong position to form and keep many lasting friendships, but as this chapter pointed out, to become an inviting friend you should start with yourself. Friends want to associate with people who like and care about themselves. If you do not treat yourself well, it is unlikely that others will treat you any better. In the next chapter we will explore this idea of inviting yourself in greater detail.

Friendship Activities

1. **Follow the Steps**. Use the steps of the inviting process to send an invitation to yourself. Think of what you "want to" do for yourself, create the invitation, send it, accept it, and evaluate it. After you have been successful with yourself, use the steps to invite a friend.
2. **Count Your Invitations**. Take a note pad and during the day write down all the nice things people say to you and do with you. They are all invitations. The next day take your pad and write down all the invitations you send to others.
3. **Draw an Invitation**. Let your imagination go, and draw or paint a picture of an invitation. What is in your picture? What colors did you use? Show your picture to others, and ask them to guess what it is.
4. **Design a "Want Ad" for a Friend**. Design an advertisement for a friend that could be placed in a newspaper, magazine, or on a billboard. Use pictures and phrases to attract the types of friends you would like to have.



Chapter 5
Inviting Yourself

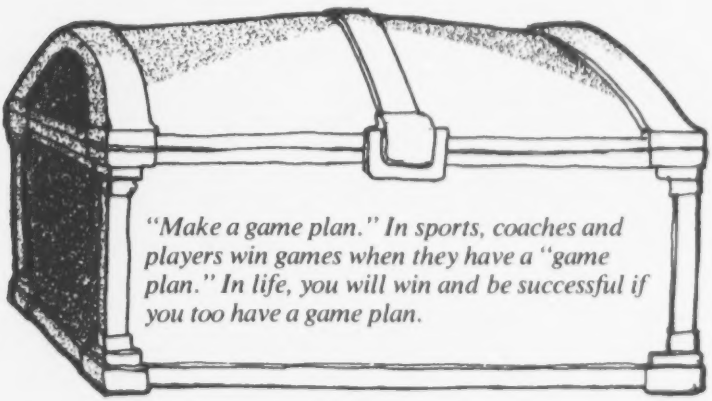
In this book you have learned about friendship and about a special way of inviting friendships. A recurring theme emphasized throughout this book is the idea that you will form friendships more easily if you start by inviting yourself. In this chapter you will explore more thoroughly this idea of sending yourself positive messages.

As with forming friendships, the process of inviting yourself requires intention on your part. You have learned in previous chapters that intention means having direction and purpose. To invite yourself, you must have a plan to make things happen. This chapter will help you plan positive messages to send to yourself. These messages will enable you to grow and become a healthy, happy, and successful person—a person with whom other people would want to be "best friends."

Developing a plan for inviting yourself includes focusing on parts of your *self* that will help you form friendships with others. In Chapter Three, you learned about several parts of the *self*. You may want to return to that chapter and decide which parts of your self-concept are most important in forming friendships. Making that decision and focusing on those parts of your *self* is the first step in making a plan. It is a way of "getting started."

Getting Started

Every plan has a beginning. A plan to invite yourself starts with you. Getting started means choosing the parts of your *self* that you believe are important in forming friendships, and deciding what you can do, or not do, to change or improve those parts of yourself. An important idea to remember about the *self*, and which you learned in an earlier chapter, is that some parts of the self are facts and some are beliefs that you have about yourself.



"Make a game plan." In sports, coaches and players win games when they have a "game plan." In life, you will win and be successful if you too have a game plan.

You control your beliefs. This means that you can change what you believe. For example, if you believe that you are too tall and no one would want to be your friend, you could change that belief by saying "I'm taller than most kids my age, but I can still be friends with many of them."

Facts are not always as easy to control or change as your beliefs. Some facts you can change, but others you cannot. In the example above, it would be impossible for you to change how tall or short you are. You have to learn to live with those kinds of facts. On occasion, facts can be changed. For example, if you ask someone to a party and that person says "no," you might be able to get an acceptance to your invitation by changing the time, date, or other fact about the party.

In some ways, changing facts may take more work than changing your beliefs. And yet, because people believe so strongly in some things, it is often very difficult for them to change those beliefs. Sadly, some people hold on to beliefs even when they are hurting themselves or others by doing so. When that happens, it is unlikely that people will make many close, lasting friendships. To make close, lasting friendships, it is important to know yourself; know the facts about yourself and the beliefs you have about those facts.

Knowing Yourself

Most of this book has focused on knowing yourself. Inviting friendships is based largely on a person's ability to know oneself and to find traits in others that match or balance the characteristics in oneself. Taking time to examine yourself and learn about your strengths and weaknesses helps to determine the areas of your life that may need to change if you are going to be successful in your friendships.

Getting to know yourself is not always easy. Because you only have one view of the world around you, it is difficult to turn your eyes toward yourself and learn who you truly are. To know yourself better, you must rely on your own self-perceptions as well as the perceptions of others.

Your self-perceptions can be examined by making a checklist about yourself. For example, you can make a list of all the things you *like about yourself.* When you have finished the list, check the items that you believe others also like about you. How many items did you mark? Are there some items not marked? Do your friends not think these items are good traits? Or, do your friends not know that you like these traits about yourself? No matter how you answer these questions, you can do something about it. For example, if you like something about yourself, but your friends do not know it, you can tell them! This is something you can control.

Now make a list of all the things you *do not like about yourself.* After you have finished the list, check the facts that you cannot change. The items you check are the things about

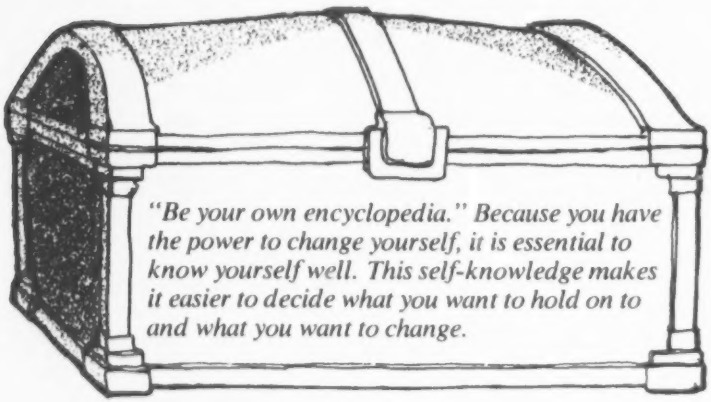
yourself that you may have to live with. Becoming aware of these facts is important because if you go through life being miserable about things that you cannot change, you will probably not be successful in friendships. The remaining things on your list—the ones you can change—provide a starting point for you to invite yourself. These are the traits that you say you do not like, but you *can* change them.

Before you make a plan to change, you might want to check your perceptions with others. To do that you can take your two lists to friends or family members and ask them these questions: What do you like about me? What do you not like about me? Compare their answers with yours and add their perceptions. Be prepared for some surprises. Often people's perceptions of us are quite different from those we have of ourselves. The more people you ask, the more complete your lists will be. When you have established the traits you like and those you do not like, you will be in a position to make changes. This information moves you to the next step, which is to have the desire to change.

Having the Desire

You will remember from Chapter Four that the first step of inviting is "wanting to." Now that you have begun to "know yourself" through your own eyes and through the eyes of others, it is time to decide what you want to do with this knowledge. What strengths do you have that will help you form friendships, and what weaknesses do you have that you want to change? Making these decisions demonstrates that you "want to" invite yourself.

Many people go through life knowing that they want to change, yet they never permit themselves to act on that knowledge. Having the desire to change may be as important, or more important, than the knowledge of what it is that you want to be different. Knowledge is the first step, but desire is what makes change a reality. It is similar to baking a cake. You might know what ingredients are needed and you might know how to mix those ingredients, but unless you do it and put the pan in the oven, the cake will not be baked!


"Be your own encyclopedia." Because you have the power to change yourself, it is essential to know yourself well. This self-knowledge makes it easier to decide what you want to hold on to and what you want to change.

Knowing yourself and having the desire to change are two important factors when inviting friendships. Doing things that help you know yourself and help you develop the desire to change will get you started on sending positive messages to yourself and inviting friendship with others. The remainder of this chapter will focus on four areas that are important to self development and to the development of close, lasting friendships. The first of these areas is related to your physical and psychological self, specifically your physical and mental health.

Being Healthy

Much of what you decide to do in your life will be related in some way to how physically able you are and how well you think about yourself and others. Poor health and distorted thinking are two frequent reasons why people choose not to do things for themselves; why they choose *not* to invite themselves. Often, people say, "Oh, I would like to do that, but I just don't feel up to it." Not "feeling up to it" is a frequent excuse for not inviting yourself. On other occasions you might hear people say, "No one wants to be my friend. Everybody hates me, so I hate everybody." This kind of unhealthy thinking is also a reason why some people have difficulty in their friendships.

How well you take care of your body and your mind will affect many other aspects of your life, including the energy and effort you put into your friendships. Each of us is given only one body, so it is important that we take the very best care of it. To begin with you should put only the best ingredients into your body.

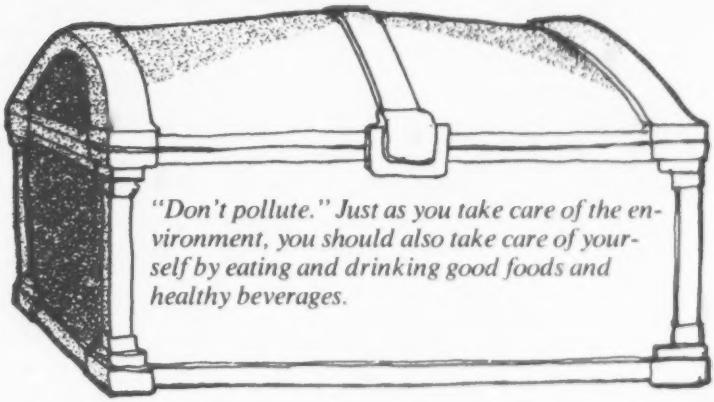
Eating and Drinking Well

Food and drink are the fuel that keep your body alive. The quality and quantity of food and drink are important factors to consider in determining how well you will live. In terms of quality, there are good foods and beverages and there are not so good foods and beverages. By the same token, there can be too little food and drink, or too much food and drink.

Choose foods and drinks that you know are good for you. Enjoy snacks and sweets on occasion, but avoid making meals of them. Eat balanced meals that satisfy your body's vitamin and mineral requirements. The same can be said for drinks. Sodas and pop are fine for occasional treats, but your body needs a steady diet of dairy products, juices, and water. Drink plenty of water. It is the most natural and beneficial beverage on earth.

While we are on the subject of what to put into your body, it is a good time to mention a warning about dangerous substances, such as drugs and alcohol. As you grow older, you will be faced with many decisions, such as "Do I want to smoke cigarettes or do I want to drink alcohol?" These will be critical questions for you and only you can answer them. By establishing healthy eating and drinking habits at an early age, you will be in a stronger position to make appropriate "adult" decisions later in life.

I have a strong bias against smoking, and it appears that the most recent health studies confirm my beliefs about this dangerous habit. Smoking cigarettes is bad. It is bad for the smoker, and it is bad for others who breathe the smoker's smoke. The best decision for you and your body (as well as your family and friends' bodies) is DON'T SMOKE.



"Don't pollute." Just as you take care of the environment, you should also take care of yourself by eating and drinking good foods and healthy beverages.

Whatever you decide about eating and drinking, these two rules may be helpful:

1. Most everything you eat or drink makes a difference to your body. Remember what you learned earlier about invitations? Everything counts. Whatever you put into your body—food, drink or other substances—makes either a positive, nourishing difference or a negative, damaging difference.
2. If you decide to eat or drink something that is not nourishing, such as sweets, do so in moderation. Eat or drink a little and then stop. Moderation allows you to enjoy occasional treats. Without moderation early in life, you may find later in life that you will not be allowed to have any treats at all. Because of weight, heart condition, sugar imbalance, or other problems, your physician will advise you that continued snacking could kill you.

Resting and Exercising

Another area of healthy living is how you use your body. Throughout your life your body will require exercise so that your muscles stay in proper shape. Exercising keeps your body in tune so that damage is avoided when muscles are called upon to do strenuous work. Exercising also makes you fit so that you can keep up the pace with others.

Sometimes your friends may want to do activities that take a lot of energy. Being fit and keeping up with them will help you to invite their continued friendship. The story of Betsy shows how not staying in shape affected her friendships.

Betsy was slightly overweight and she did not get much exercise. Rather than be active, she would sit at home, eat snacks, and watch television all afternoon and evening. Her friends liked having Betsy around because she was nice and had a good sense of humor. But when she was with them, Betsy would often ask her friends to "slow down" or "stop a minute" so that she could catch up or rest. For example, when shopping at the mall, she would always want to sit on a bench for a while. When her friends did not slow down enough, she would whine and complain. Eventually, Betsy's friends stopped inviting her to join them because they got tired of waiting for her to catch up, and they became annoyed with her frequent whinning. A little less television watching and a little more exercise might have helped Betsy keep up with her friends.

In addition to exercise, your body needs sufficient rest. Your body is not a machine that can run continuously without a break. Making sure that you go to bed at reasonable hours and get plenty of rest invites yourself to have enough energy each day to do the tasks that are expected of you and to do the other things that you want to do for yourself. Without sufficient rest, you cannot function well. Not only will you fail to keep up with everyone else, but your tiredness will also affect your mood and attitude. Have you ever known someone who, when he or she got sleepy, became difficult to get along with? That is what happens to most people when they have not had enough rest. Irritable and difficult people do not make very good friends. By getting plenty of rest and sufficient exercise, your body will be in optimal shape to keep up with the "friendship pace."

Keeping Clean

A third way of being healthy is by keeping your body clean. Uncleanliness affects your ability to form friendships in two

ways. First, uncleanliness contributes to infection and sickness. If you are always feeling sickly or having problems with infections, it will be hard to keep many close friends. Sometimes illnesses are unavoidable. When they are, your friends will stand by you and try to help. But when your sicknesses or diseases are caused by your continuous lack of health care, friends will lose patience with you. They will be less likely to call on you in the future.

A second way that uncleanliness affects your friendships is by the unpleasant odors from your body and your clothes. Keeping clean and smelling nice sends an invitation to yourself as well as to those around you. It sends the message that you care about yourself. If you do not care about how clean you are or how pleasant you smell, then others may not care to be near you. You might remember that "proximity" was one factor mentioned in Chapter One that relates to choosing friends. It means "nearness." If your body has unpleasant odors, it is unlikely that anyone will want to be in close proximity to you.

A factor related to cleanliness is good grooming. People who care about their appearances are accepted by others. This is logical. If you care about yourself and how clean and neat you look, chances are that you will care about others and they, in turn, will care about you. In contrast, if you do not help yourself look nice, then you probably do not care about yourself and may not care about others. When others read the signal that you do not care about yourself, they will be reluctant to send signals that they want to be your friend.

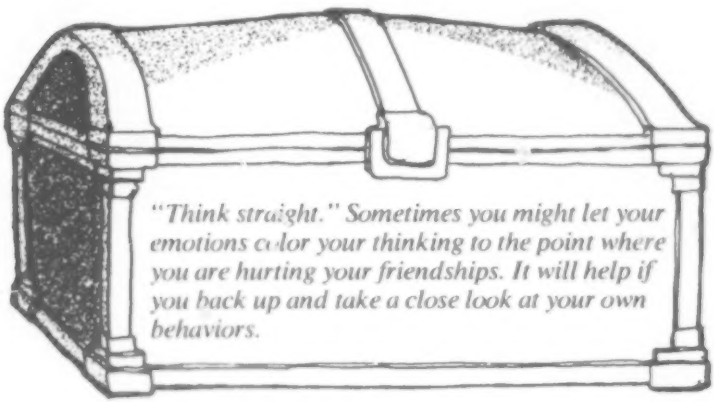
As you learned earlier in this book, there are some physical facts about yourself that cannot be changed, but good grooming is something you can control. Good grooming means making the best of what you have. Being clean and looking your best sends a friendly signal to others.

Tuning Your Psyche

Another area of being healthy is having a strong and stable mind. This means being psychologically and educationally

healthy. The Greek word for mind is "psyche" and our English word "psychology" has to do with the study and knowledge of the human mind and behavior. When people are psychologically healthy, they think and behave in positive and helpful ways. On the other hand, when people have psychological problems, their thoughts and behaviors give them trouble.

Thinking and behaving well are important in forming helpful friendships. Sometimes people have trouble in their friendships because they think they are so much better than others, or they think they are not as good as others. Both of these types of thinking can handicap a person when making friends. Friends do not want to associate with people who think they are superior, nor do they want to be with people who constantly worry, put themselves down, or complain about how bad their life is.



"Think straight." Sometimes you might let your emotions color your thinking to the point where you are hurting your friendships. It will help if you back up and take a close look at your own behaviors.

When you feel that your thinking and behaving are becoming a problem for you, when they prevent you from forming friendships, you may want to seek help from someone. You could start by talking with your parents, a minister, a teacher, or a school counselor about your feelings. Usually talking about these concerns with someone else will help you get direction and enable you to solve your problems.

Later in this chapter you will learn more about how behaving and thinking in positive ways, and how becoming more educated can help your friendships. For now, an important point is that being healthy consists of attending to your physical and psychological self. While we have separated these parts of your *self* for discussion purposes, they all relate to one another and really should not be separated when inviting yourself. For example, taking care of your body by being clean also allows you to feel good and think well of yourself. In this way, being healthy means caring for your physical and psychological self as one.

Maintaining Good Health

In addition to proper eating, exercising, resting, cleaning, grooming, thinking, and behaving, your body requires regular maintenance. This means taking steps to see your physician, dentist, nurse, counselor, or other professionals for checkups, vaccinations, and advice about how to maintain your health. It also means following their suggestions about how to care for yourself. Taking medicine as directed, watching your weight, brushing and flossing your teeth, seeking support from friends, and doing other things to insure that your body and mind are in optimal health are a few ways that you invite yourself.

Maintaining good health relates to all the above areas—a healthy diet, proper rest and exercise, bodily care, good grooming, and positive thinking. All of these healthful goals require specific behaviors that you should do for yourself. As you learned in Chapter Three, your behavioral self is another important part of your self-concept that affects your friendships. In the next section you will examine behavior and its importance to friendship more closely.

Behaving Appropriately

Choosing friends, forming friendships, and keeping friendships require intentional behaviors. Friendships do not happen by accident. Rather, friendships are established

when specifically planned positive messages are created, sent, and accepted. These messages are sent and accepted in the form of the behaviors that you choose to use. This is also true for the messages that you send to yourself.

Chapter Three of this book presented a list of behaviors that you read and checked to determine which behaviors you had used during the day. The behaviors were a sample of all the behaviors that help to make up a person's behavioral self. The list was long, and you probably added some of your own behaviors to that list. There are many behaviors to choose each day of your life. This is true for the behaviors that you choose when inviting others, and it is also true for the behaviors that you choose to invite yourself.

What is most important is that *you choose* your behaviors. You choose what you are going to do and how you are going to behave. Sometimes people influence what you do by "inviting" or "disinviting" you, but the final decision is always up to you. For example, if friends ask you to go to the store with them and your mother is expecting you home, you have the responsibility of deciding which behavior, going to the store or going home, to choose. Once you make that choice, you also have the responsibility for the consequences of the behavior you choose. Consequences are what happen after you behave a certain way. If you decide to go with your friends, one consequence might be that your mother would be very worried because she does not know where you are. You would be responsible for creating that worrisome situation for your mother.

Behaving appropriately and accepting responsibility for the behaviors you choose are important ways of inviting yourself. Let us look at a few ideas that can guide you in choosing appropriate behaviors.

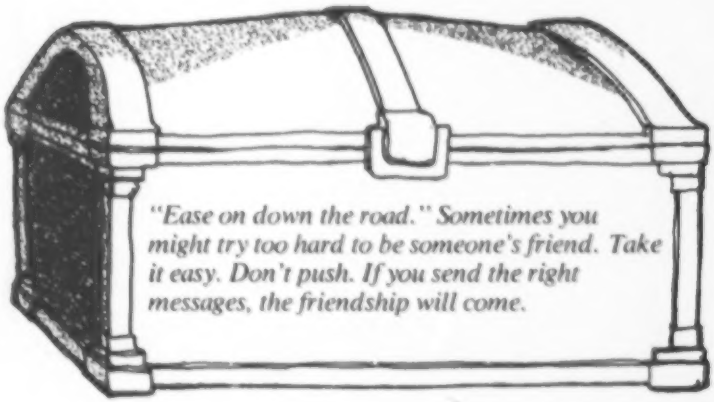
Doing Unto Others

The Golden Rule says "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." This means that you should always treat other people the way that you would like to be treated your-

self. If you want to have good friends and be invited by others, then you will want to choose friendly behaviors that invite them as well. Treating people in friendly, positive ways helps you establish a posture that says "I'm a good person." Such a statement tells others that you have the optimistic, trustful, and respectful qualities that they look for in a friend.

The last few words of the Golden Rule are the most important: "as you would have them do unto you." Notice that it does not say "as they have done unto you." You should treat people the way you *want* to be treated, not the way you are treated by others. On occasion people are mean and nasty. They send disinvitations. When that happens to you, are you mean and nasty in return? If so, you may want to practice the Golden Rule. Sending negative messages in return for another's disinvitations is not the way to establish friendships. It is only a way to start a war. It does not matter who strikes "the first blow." What matters is who is willing to stop it and start behaving more appropriately.

This brings us to another way to check your behaviors. Behaving appropriately and being responsible mean paying attention to *your* own behaviors and not to what others are doing. It also means taking responsibility for your behaviors and not blaming others for your mistakes.



"Ease on down the road." Sometimes you might try too hard to be someone's friend. Take it easy. Don't push. If you send the right messages, the friendship will come.

Avoiding Blame

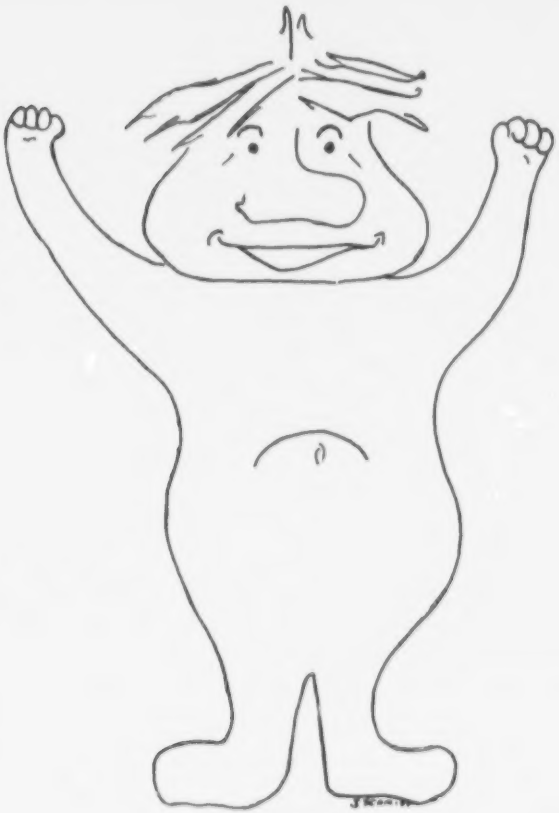
Too often, friendships end because friends blame each other when things go wrong. It is easy to search for someone to blame. On the other hand, it is more difficult to stand up and apologize for your mistakes. A true friendship, as you have learned, has qualities such as trust and respect that prevent it from decaying into an atmosphere of blame, distrust, and disrepect. Having the courage to take responsibility and admit your mistakes is a hallmark of true friendship.

There is one caution about avoiding blame. Being responsible for your behavior does not mean you should accept the blame for another's mistakes. A good friendship is based on mutual trust. Each friend, therefore, avoids blaming the other. If you are in a relationship where you accept most of the responsibility when things go wrong, perhaps you need to examine the balance of trust and respect in that friendship. Take responsiblity for *your* own behavior and expect your friends to take equal responsibility for theirs.

Examining your behaviors and relationships is a continuous process. It is through this examination that you tell yourself what you think about yourself and your relationships with others. Telling yourself, or "self-instructing," is a way of evaluating your behaviors.

Self-instructing

If you are like most people, there are times when you probably talk to yourself. You may not talk out loud (or maybe you do!), but you say things to yourself about your behaviors. Sometimes this self-talk is positive and encouraging. For example, when you are trying to do a difficult math problem and you tell yourself, "I know how to do this. I can get the right answer," you give encouragement to yourself. When you get the answer and solve the problem correctly, you say, "I knew I could!" You tell yourself good things as a reward for your accomplishment.



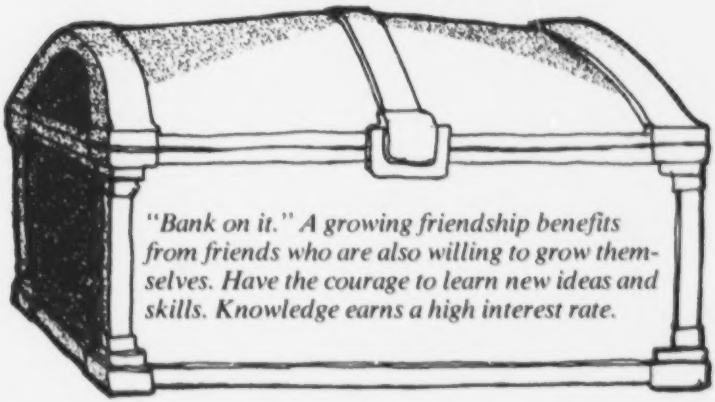
"I know I can!"

Other times you might talk to yourself in negative ways. You might worry about what others think, and you say, "Oh, I can't do that. It won't be good. It will look awful." Negative self-instructions handicap you and prevent you from having the courage to choose appropriate behaviors. People who constantly put themselves down with negative self-talk usually have difficulty making close friends. This is because their negative attitudes about themselves make them difficult to be around. An example of how self-talk can affect a friendship is seen in the story of Bart and Reggie.

Bart and Reggie were friends. They were together often, they were in the same class at school, and they belonged to the same boy scout troop. Reggie liked to try new things. He was adventuresome. Bart, on the other hand, worried about trying new things. He often thought, "I won't be able to do this as well as others." Because Bart spent so much time in negative self-talk, he frequently shied away from doing things with Reggie. For example, when the boy scouts built a new ropes course with a swinging bridge, rope ladder, Tarzan vine, and other events, Bart would not take his turn on the course. Reggie was one of the first to try.

As time went by and new adventures and activities were planned, Reggie made new friends in scouts and at school. Because he was unwilling to try new things, Bart did not make many new friends, and he became something of a "loner." As Reggie made new friends, his friendship with Bart became less important and eventually their friendship ended.

Self-instructing can be either positive or negative. Everyone self-talks, so it is important that you learn to emphasize positive self-instructions that will help you choose appropriate behaviors. You want to choose behaviors that will foster helpful friendships. One way to improve your self-instructions is by keeping a sharp mind. This means learning more and taking pride in your education. Education is another important area for inviting yourself.



"Bank on it." A growing friendship benefits from friends who are also willing to grow themselves. Have the courage to learn new ideas and skills. Knowledge earns a high interest rate.

Becoming Educated

Friendships are formed and survive because people want to share with others, want to help others, want to be a part of others' lives, and want to get as much out of life as possible. Sharing your life means having something to share. One of the most important things you can share with others is your knowledge.

Friendships thrive on the exchange of ideas, information, and wisdom. Earlier in this book you read about how close friends can help when you have difficult decisions to make. That is one of the reasons people want friends, so they can rely on friendly advice during difficult times. Because your friends will want to rely on you, it is important that you have reliable information to share with them. That means becoming educated.

Learning and knowledge are critical areas of human development. They are also necessary conditions for friendship. Most people search for friends who want to experience life, want to grow, and want to achieve in areas that enable them to be successful. Becoming educated is directly related to your ability to achieve and enjoy life. Whether you want to achieve in art, sports, business, or other areas, education will play a vital role in your success. And that success will contribute to the friendships you form.

As with friendships, education does not happen by accident. It takes intention and planning. In school, your teachers, principals, and counselors help you with your education, but if you do not *intend* to learn, all their help will be useless. At home, your parents, grandparents, and others guide your education, but if you do not listen to their guidance, you will not learn. In the next three sections, you will learn about education and its impact on friendship. First, you will learn about educational planning.

Having Goals

To begin inviting yourself educationally, you must first decide what areas of education are important to you. In school, many areas of education are decided for you. Read-

ing, writing, math, science, and social studies are a few subjects that give you a basic education. These subjects are chosen for you. Beyond what you learn in school, however, it is good to choose additional areas of education that are important to you. For example, you might be interested in sports, music, art, or perhaps you have a deep interest in one of the school subjects, such as science. If you know of these interests, you can plan ways to become more educated in those areas.

Planning to become more educated means setting goals for yourself. For example, suppose that you were very interested in swimming. You were not only interested in learning the basics of swimming, but also in becoming a great swimmer who would compete in major national and international swimming events. If you had such an interest, you would begin setting goals to become a great swimmer. You would join swim teams in your town. You would practice regularly. You would plan an exercise routine with your coach to develop strong muscles for swimming. And, you would probably make friends with other boys and girls who had similar interest in swimming. All of these activities would help you achieve your goal to become a successful swimmer.

Inviting yourself to become educated will influence the friends you make in your life. It will influence your friendships during your school-age years, and it will influence your friendships in your adulthood. By caring about your education, you demonstrate that you care about yourself. As you learned earlier, caring for oneself and others is another important quality in friendship. Caring for yourself educationally does not end when you finish school. Rather, it is a life-long process of learning.

Learning for Life

Even though much of your learning is taking place in school right now, you also learn quite a bit on your own outside of school. Learning in school is very important, and you can invite yourself in this learning process by forming good

study habits, behaving appropriately in class, and doing assignments on schedule. Learning on your own is equally important, and can be developed by the books, magazines, and newspapers you read, the athletic teams you are on, the clubs and church groups you join, and the hobbies you take up. When inviting yourself to become more educated, it is essential to realize that learning goes on forever.

This idea of life-long learning can be applied to friendships as well. You have read that friendships, like gardens, require attention and caring. Friendships that are neglected become wilted and unproductive. Part of caring for your friendships means being willing to learn and do new things. Friendships that constantly repeat events, fail to search for opportunities, and refuse to accept new experiences tend to die from boredom. Friendships, as with life in general, are successful when they seek mutually beneficial learning experiences. These experiences should enlighten, entertain, and educate. While at times education can be hard work, in friendship it can also be fun.

Learning for Fun

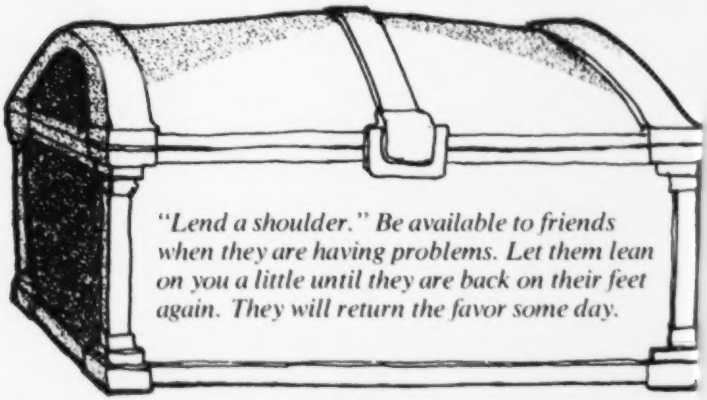
Sharing a learning experience with friends can be fun and rewarding. Learning does not have to be a drag. Too often when a task seems difficult, people assume a negative attitude and "self-talk" their way into misery. Maybe you have heard students talking this way in school: "This is too hard. It's stupid; why do we have to learn this? We will never use this stuff." Because learning is sometimes hard, does not mean that it cannot be enjoyable. Use your friendships in ways that help you to enjoy learning.

For example, if you are studying for a spelling test and you do not like spelling, ask a friend to study with you by making up a spelling contest. Turn your studying into fun by pretending you are on a television game show and the winner gets to take a rocket trip to the moon! The point is that friendships can help you to work hard and play hard at the same time. Not all of life is fun. Sometimes bad things hap-

pen and sometimes learning is not very easy. By using your friendships, you can minimize the hard times. Frequently, things are not as bad as you tell yourself. Friendships help you see the good things you can get out of tough situations. Finding benefits in difficult situations is one way of enjoying life.

Enjoying Life

All of the preceding sections of this chapter—Being Healthy, Behaving Appropriately, and Becoming Educated—have one common goal. They each contribute to an enjoyable life. This book began by stating that people who enjoy their lives want to share that joy with others, and they want to help other people enjoy their lives as well. That is the reason for friendship. In this chapter you have learned that by being healthy, behaving appropriately, and becoming educated you will improve your chances of forming and keeping close, beneficial friendships. The establishment of these friendships will help you enjoy your life more fully.



"Lend a shoulder." Be available to friends when they are having problems. Let them lean on you a little until they are back on their feet again. They will return the favor some day.

Inviting yourself to enjoy life is the first step to forming enjoyable friendships. Again, as with health, behavior, and education, the choice is yours. The extent to which you enjoy your life will depend on how much you *intend* to enjoy it. Sadly, there are people who go through life saying that "there is no party." They are not enjoying their lives. What

they fail to realize is that one sure way to enjoy life is to *have the party yourself.* And invite all your friends! You will enjoy life if you invite yourself to your own celebration.

Celebrating Life

There are limitless ways to celebrate with friends. For example, going shopping, having a slumber party, getting a group together for a football game or a movie, helping plan a dance for school, volunteering to clean up the church grounds, and many other activities demonstrate ways of celebrating friendship and life.

Celebrating life does not always have to be a big blast. There are many simple ways to enjoy yourself. Cuddling up with your favorite book, listening to music with your best friend, relaxing with your pet, sending a "Miss You" card to a friend who moved away, and going out to see the stars at night are a few simple ways that life can be celebrated. Sometimes it is the simple things in life that you overlook. Gazing at the stars is a good example. Someone once said that if the stars were visible only once a year, everyone would go out to see them. Because the stars are always there, people take their beauty for granted.

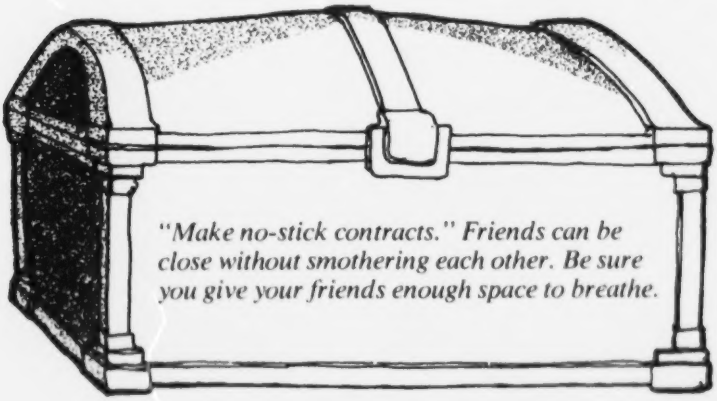
Celebrating life means not taking things for granted. It means having the big party and bash as well as enjoying the simple pleasures. A trip to a theme park, a day at the zoo, an hour alone watching television, fishing in a quiet stream, or meditating in church can each in their own way contribute to your celebration of life. What is important is that you plan ways to celebrate with others as well as taking time for yourself.

Taking Time Alone

The human mind and body can only withstand so much activity at one time. It is wise to take time on occasion to energize yourself. This process of energizing not only helps you, but also helps your friendships. Friendships, as with electronic toys, need energy. They do not run on their own. Energy in friendships can come in the form of positive messages sent to yourself and others.

Sometimes friendships are energized when friends are not together. Friends need some time apart. They need time alone to do things for themselves without any guidance or interference from others. During these times alone, you can learn new things to share with your friends when you are together again. Friends who are always together take the risk that the "freshness" and excitement of their friendship may wear thin. Perhaps you have had a friend in the past who stuck to you like velcro. After a while you got tired of this person "hanging on" all the time. Because your "velcro friend" would not leave you any time for yourself, you ended the friendship.

True friends respect the space of others. They do not have a need to "hang on," and they recognize the importance of spending time alone or with other friends. Inviting yourself to spend a little quality time alone may be the best way to insure lasting friendships. It also gives you time to evaluate the friendships you have and to consider new friendships to form.


"Make no-stick contracts." Friends can be close without smothering each other. Be sure you give your friends enough space to breathe.

Making Friends

The purpose of this book was to share with you some ideas about friendship and how friends can be helpful in your life. It is appropriate to end this book with the idea that if you want to enjoy life to its fullest, you will invite yourself to form many friendships. Some of these friendships will be brief and some may be lasting, but all of your friendships will contribute to your life.

As you learned in this book, there are many factors that will influence your friendships throughout your life. Most important are the friendly messages that you create and send to yourself and others. The quality, frequency, and duration of the messages you send will directly influence the quality, frequency, and duration of friendships you encounter. If you cultivate trust, respect, and optimism, and you intentionally invite yourself and others frequently, consistently, and dependably, you will increase the likelihood of being successful in your friendships and of being successful in your life.

Friendship Activities

1. **Check Your Menu**. Keep a list of everything you eat during one week. At the end of the week, check your list to see how many snacks you have had. If it is too many, perhaps you should cut back on your "snack attacks."

2. **Catch Yourself**. Every time you catch yourself using the word "can't," write it down. Or, if you find yourself blaming others when things do not go the way that you would like them to, make note of it. You will know you are blaming others if you use phrases like "You *should* have..." or "It's your fault!" See how many times you use the word "can't" or blame others during a week. If you use the word "can't" often, you might be missing opportunities for learning, adventure, or enjoyment in your relationships with others. If you find that you frequently blame others when things go wrong, you might be jeopardizing the trust that your friends have in you.

3. **Treat Yourself**. Do something nice for yourself. Think about something you have wanted to do for yourself, plan it, and make it happen. If it is something that costs money, figure out ways to earn the money and save for it. The important thing is to do something for yourself every now and then. You deserve it!

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Invitation to Friendship

John J. Schmidt, Ed.D.

Invitation to Friendship is a book for young people who want to learn about themselves and about the importance of developing beneficial and lasting friendships. In this book, Dr. Schmidt takes the reader on a journey to explore the world of friendship, to examine factors that influence self-development and friendship, and to describe how caring for oneself is the first step toward inviting friendship with others.

The book introduces an "invitational model" to help the reader learn about positive ways to establish friendships. Using this model, Dr. Schmidt explains the importance of "perceptions" and "self-concept" in inviting oneself and others.

Features of this book include:

- Five brief chapters, each highlighted with realistic examples of friendships.
- Chapters that are topically divided to facilitate group discussions.
- Cartoons and "treasure chests" that illustrate important ideas and concepts about friendships.
- Friendship activities at the end of each chapter.

About the Author

Dr. John J. Schmidt has worked in education with young people, parents, and teachers for many years. During that time, he has been a teacher, counselor, university instructor, and program supervisor in Vermont and North Carolina. Dr. Schmidt is co-author with Dr. William Purkey of the book, *The Inviting Relationship*, and has authored several articles in journals and magazines.

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